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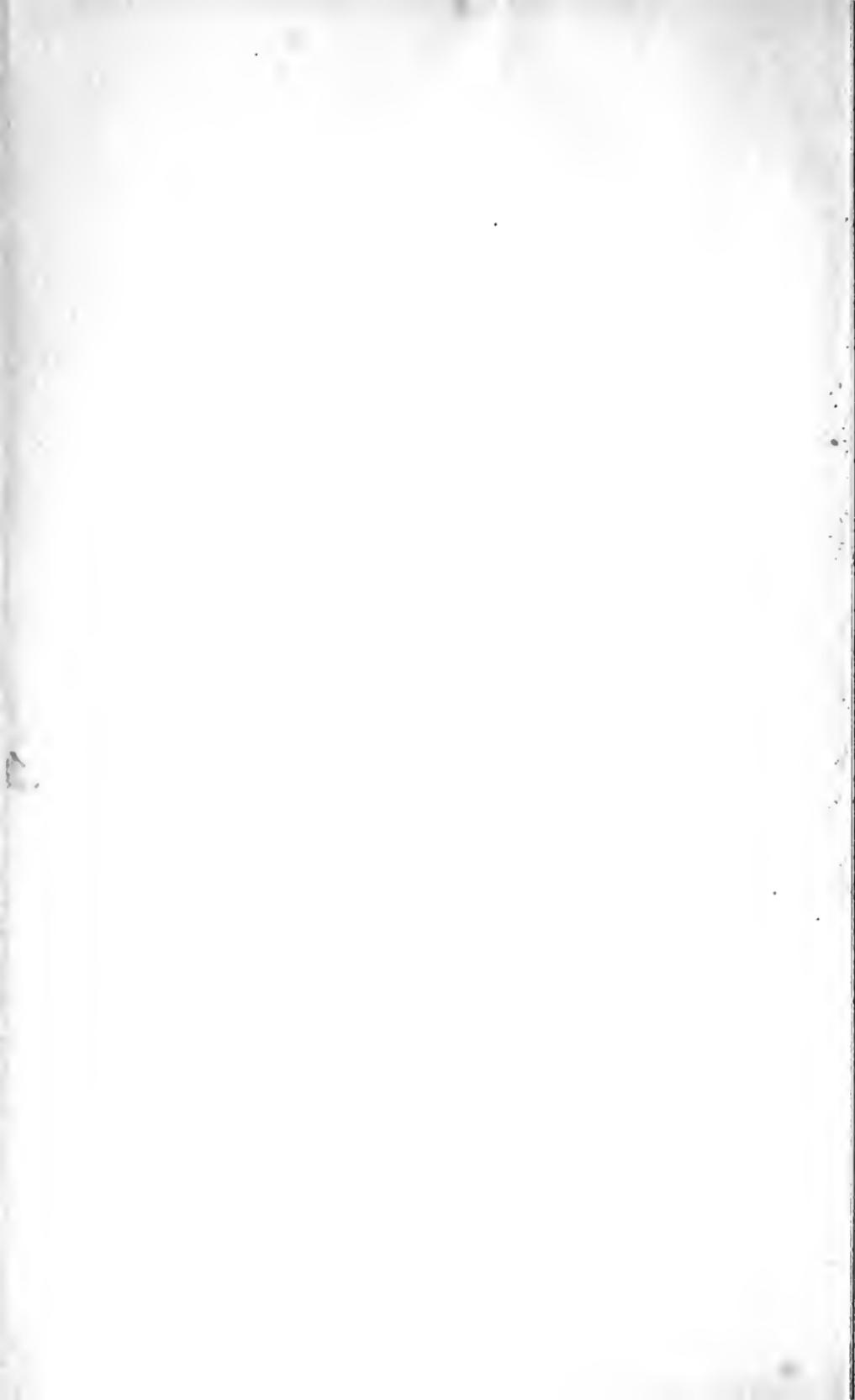


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THE
ROUND TABLE.



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THE ROUND TABLE:

A

COLLECTION OF ESSAYS

ON

LITERATURE, MEN, AND MANNERS.

BY WILLIAM HAZLITT.

Third Edition.

EDITED BY HIS SON.

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TO

MR. SERGEANT TALFOURD, M. P.,

WHOM THE AUTHOR OF THESE PAGES

RANKED AMONGST HIS MOST VALUED FRIENDS,

AND WHOSE POWER OF MIND,

THOUGH HE KNEW HIM NOT AS THE

A U T H O R O F I O N,

HE HIGHLY ESTIMATED,

This Volume is Dedicated.



ADVERTISEMENT BY THE AUTHOR.

THE following work falls somewhat short of its title and original intention. It was proposed by my friend, Mr. HUNT, to publish a series of papers in the Examiner, in the manner of the early periodical Essayists, the Spectator and Tatler. These papers were to be contributed by various persons on a variety of subjects; and Mr. HUNT, as the Editor, was to take the characteristic or dramatic part of the work upon himself. I undertook to furnish occasional Essays and Criticisms; one or two other friends promised their assistance: but the essence of the work was to be miscellaneous. The next thing was to fix upon a title for it. After much doubtful consultation, that of THE ROUND TABLE was agreed upon as most descriptive

of its nature and design. But our plan had been no sooner arranged and entered upon than Buonaparte landed at Frejus, *et voila la Table Ronde dissoûte.* Our little congress was broken up, as well as the great one: Politics called off the attention of the Editor from the Belles Lettres; and the task of continuing the work fell chiefly upon the person who was least able to give life and spirit to the original design. A want of variety in the subjects and mode of treating them is, perhaps, the least disadvantage resulting from this circumstance. All the papers, in the two volumes here offered to the public, were written by myself and Mr HUNT, except a letter communicated by a friend in the seventeenth number. Out of the fifty-two numbers, twelve are Mr. HUNT's, with the signature L. H. For all the rest I am answerable.

W. HAZLITT.

January 5, 1817.

NOTICE OF THE EDITOR.

IN preparing the present edition of the “Round Table,” I have omitted all those articles which have appeared, or are intended to appear, in other volumes of the current series of the Works of William Hazlitt, as published by Mr. Templeman. The articles now omitted are the following:—“On the Tatler,” which may be found in the Lectures on the Comic Writers; “On Kean’s Iago,” which forms part of the View of the English Stage, a new edition of which, with large additions, will appear in due course in the present series; “On the Love of the Country,” which is to be found in the Lectures on the English Poets; “On Milton’s Versification;” “On Milton’s Eve;” and “On Wordsworth’s Excursion;” all of which are also in the edition of the Lectures on the English Poets, just published; “On Hogarth,” “On the Catalogue

Raisonné of the British Institution," and "Why the Arts are not Progressive;" all of which will be found in the edition of the Sketches of the Picture Galleries of England, which, with large additions, comprising the whole of my Father's writings on Art, will be published as soon as possible; "On the Midsummer Night's Dream," which is in the View of the English Stage; and "On the Beggar's Opera," and "On Modern Comedy," both of which are printed in the edition of the Lectures on The Comic Writers, just published. In place of the articles omitted, I have inserted three articles contributed by my father to "The Liberal," a work published by Mr. John Hunt, in 1822, and now very scarce. The reader will, I am sure, thank me for having retained Mr. Leigh Hunt's contributions to this volume. "The Round Table," deprived of his presence, would lose very much of its attraction, and I am convinced that, had my father lived to bring out a dozen editions of the "Round Table," he would never have separated himself from a companion so full of wit and wisdom.

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THE ROUND TABLE.

No. I.

INTRODUCTION.

It has often struck me, in common with other luxurious persons who are fond of reading at breakfast, and who are well-tempered enough, particularly on such occasions, to put up with a little agreeable advice, that there has now been a sufficient distance of time since the publication of our good old periodical works, and a sufficient change in matters worthy of social observation, to warrant the appearance of a similar set of papers.

Upon this design, with the assistance of a few companions, and with all sorts of determinations to be equally instructive and delightful, I am accordingly now entering ; and must give the reader to understand, in their name as well as my own, that, wishing to be regarded as his companions also, we act as becomes all honest persons under such circumstances, and profess to be no other

than what we are:—in other words, we assume no fictitious characters, or what an acquaintance of ours, in his becoming disdain of the original French, would call *names of war*.

A hundred years back, when the mode of living was different from what it is now, and taverns and coffee-houses made the persons of the wits familiar to every body, assumptions of this kind may have been necessary. *Captain Steele*, for instance, the gay fellow about town, might not always have been listened to with becoming attention, or even gravity, especially if he had been a little too inarticulate over-night;—he therefore put on the wrinkles and privileges of *Isaac Bickerstaff*, the old gentleman. *Sir Richard* might be a little better, but not perhaps during an election, or after the failure of a fish-pool; and so he retreated into the ancient and impregnable composition of *Nestor Ironside*.

I do not mean to say that we have none of the foibles of our illustrious predecessors. It would be odd, indeed (to speak candidly, and with that humility which becomes frail beings like men), if our numerous and very eminent virtues had no drawback;—but more on this subject presently. All that I say is that we have not the same occasion for disguise; and, therefore, as we prefer at all times a plain, straight-forward behaviour, and, in fact, choose to be as original as we can in our productions, we have avoided the trouble of adding assumed characters to our real ones; and

shall talk, just as we think, walk, and take dinner, in our own proper persons. It is true, the want of old age, or of a few patriarchal eccentricities to exercise people's patronage on, and induce their self-love to bear with us, may be a deficiency in our pretensions with some ; but we must plainly confess, with whatever mortification, that we are still at a flourishing time of life ; and that the trouble and experience, which have passed over our heads, have left our teeth, hair, and eyes, pretty nearly as good as they found them. One of us (which, by the way, must recommend us to all the married people, and admirers of Agesilaus,) was even caught the other day acting the great horse with a boy on his shoulders ; and another (which will do as much for us among the bachelors, and give Lord's Ground in particular a lively sense of our turn of thinking) was not a vast while ago counted the second best cricketer in his native town.

On the other hand, as we wish to avoid the solitary and dictatorial manner of the latter Essayists, and, at the same time, are bound to shew our readers that we have something to make up for the want of flapped waistcoats and an instructive decay of the faculties, we hereby inform them that we are, literally speaking, a small party of friends, who meet once a week at a Round Table to discuss the merits of a leg of mutton, and of the subjects upon which we are to write. This we do without any sort of formality, letting the

stream of conversation wander through any ground it pleases, and sometimes retiring into our own respective cogitations, though it must be confessed, very rarely,—for we have a lively, worn-visaged fellow among us, who has a trick, when in company, of leaping, as it were, on the top of his troubles, and keeping our spirits in motion with all sorts of pleasant interludes. After dinner, if the weather requires it, we draw round the fire, with a biscuit or two, and the remainder of a philosophic bottle of wine; or, as we are all passionately fond of music, one of us touches an instrument, in a manner that would make a professor die with laughter to see him using his thumb where he should put his finger or his finger where he should use his thumb; but nevertheless in such a way as to ravish the rest of us, who know still less than he does. At an Italian air we even think him superior to Tramezzani, though we generally give vent to our feelings on this point in a whisper. We suspect, however, that he overheard us one evening, as he immediately attempted some extraordinary graces, which, with all our partiality, we own were abominable.

The reader will see, by this account, that we do not mean to be over austere on the score of domestic enjoyments. Then for our accomplishments as writers, one of us is deep in mathematics and the learned languages, another in metaphysics, and a third in poetry; and, as for

experience, and a proper sympathy with the infirmities of our species, the former of which is absolutely necessary for those who set up to be instructors, and the latter quite as much so to give it a becoming tone, and render it lastingly useful,—we shall not break it upon a greater principle by imitating the reckless candour of Rousseau, and make a parade of what other weaknesses we may have,—but for sickness, for ordinary worldly trouble, and, in one or two respects, for troubles not very ordinary, few persons, perhaps, at our time of life, can make a handsomer shew of infirmities. Of some we shall only say that they have been common to most men, as well as ourselves, who were not born to estates of their own: but these and others have enabled us to buy, what money might have still kept us poor in—some good real knowledge, and, at bottom of all our egotism, some warm-wishing unaffected humility. Even at school, where there is nothing much to get sick or melancholy with, if indulgent parents are out of the way, we were initiated into experience a little earlier than most people; the tribulations we have fallen into before and after this time are almost innumerable; and we may add, as a specimen of our experience after the fashion of Ulysses, that we have all of us, at separate periods from one another, been in France. I must confess, however, for my own part, that I was not of an age to make much use of my

travels, having gone thither in my childhood to get rid of one sickness, and only staid long enough to survive another. It was just before the decrees that altered religious as well as political matters in that country, and almost all that I remember is a good old woman, our landlady, who used to weep bitterly over me, because I should die a heretic, and be buried in unconsecrated ground. I have made an exception ever since, out of the whole French nation, in favour of the people at Calais ; and was delighted, though not surprised, to hear the other day from one of our Round Table, that the women there were all pretty and prepossessing, and still looked as if they could be kind to young heretics.

Of this accomplished and experienced party of ours, circumstances have made me the president ; but I wish it to be distinctly understood that I do not on that account claim any pre-eminence but a nominal one. We shall all choose our own subjects, only open to the suggestions and comments of each other. Correspondents, therefore (and I must here mention that all persons not actually admitted to the said Table must write to us in the form of a letter), may address, as they please, either to the President of the Round Table ; or to the President and his fellows in general, as, " Mr. President,—Gentlemen of the Round Table ;" or to any one of my friends in particular, according to his signature,

as, “To the Member of the Round Table, T, or W.” This perhaps will be determined by the nature of the communication ; but I was the more anxious to say something on the point, inasmuch as my situation often reminds me of other great men who have sat at the head of tables, round or square, such as Charlemagne with his peers, who were persons of greater prowess than himself ; or King Arthur, who, in spite of his renown, was nothing, after all, to some of his knights, Launcelet or Tristan, for instance ; or, to give a more familiar example, Robin Hood and his fellows, every one of whom, before he could be admitted into the company, must have beaten the captain.

I must not, however, before I conclude, pass over King Arthur so slightly, as our Round Table, to a certain degree, is inevitably associated in our minds with his. The name, indeed, was given to us by one of that sex who have always been the chief ornaments and promoters of chivalrous institutions ; and for my part, when I am sitting at the head of it, with my knights on each side, I can hardly help fancying that I am putting a triumphant finish to the old prophecy, and feeling in me, under an unexpected but more useful character, the revived spirit of that great British Monarch, who was to return again to light from his subterraneous exile, and repair the Round Table in all its glory :—

“ He is a King ycrowned in Faerie
 With sceptre and sword, and with his regally
 Shall resort as lord and sovereigne
 Out of Faere, and reigne in Britaine,
 And repaire againe the old Round Table,
 Among princes King incomparable.”

LYDGATE.

To this idea, and the long train of romantic associations and inspired works connected with it, we shall sometimes resort in our poetical moments, just as we shall keep the more familiar idea of the dining-table before us in our ordinary ones. Nor will it always, indeed, be absent from our minds during our philosophical and most abstruse speculations ; for what have the most chivalrous persons been, from the earliest ages, but so many moral reformers, who encountered error and corruption with various weapons, who brought down brute force, however gigantic, who carried light into darkness, and liberty among the imprisoned, and dissipated, with some charm or other about them, the illusions of pleasure ?

No. II.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

As the reader has been given to understand that the subjects which my friends and myself mean to discuss will form part of our conversation at Table, and that the conversation will

nevertheless be as casual and unrestrained as it usually is among social parties, he may easily conclude that they will be of a very various description. We shall confine ourselves, indeed, to no kinds in particular ; and, taking advantage sometimes of the character of table-talk, even the same article may contain a variety of subjects, and start off from one point to another with as unshackled and extemporaneous an enjoyment as one of Montaigne's. This, however, will be but seldom ; for we are habitually fond of arrangement, and do not like to see even the dishes out of their proper positions. But, at the same time, though we shall generally confine ourselves to one subject in our Essays, and sometimes be altogether facetious, and sometimes exclusively profound, we shall always think ourselves at liberty to be both, if we please,—always at liberty to set out merrily in a first paragraph, or to be pleasant in a parenthesis. These things, while they refresh the writer, serve to give a fillip to the reader's attention ; and act upon him as the handing round of a snuff-box may do in the middle of conversation.

Besides, there is a beauty of contrast in this variety ; and as we mean to be very powerful writers, as well as every thing else that is desirable, power is never seen to so much advantage as when it goes about a thing carelessly. You like to see a light horseman, who seems as

if he could abolish you with a passing cut, and not a great heavy fellow, who looks as if he should tumble down in case of missing you, or a little red staring busybody, who would be obliged to wield his sword two-handed, and kill himself first with exertion. When Bonaparte set out on his Russian expedition, they say that he got into his carriage, twirling his glove about and singing

“Marlbrouk to the wars is going :”

Perhaps we shall be quite as gay and buoyant when setting out on the loftiest speculations,—barring, of course, all comparisons with him on the score of success, though even we cannot answer for what a north-east wind or a fall of snow may do to us. I have myself, before now, had a whole host of fine ideas blown away by the one; and have been compelled to retreat from the other, mind and body, with my knees almost into the fire.

In short, to put an end to this preface exemplificatory, the most trifling matters may sometimes be not only the commencement, but the causes, of the gravest discussions. The fall of an apple from a tree suggested the doctrine of gravitation; and the same apple, for aught we know, served up in a dumpling, may have assisted the philosopher in his notions of heat; for who has not witnessed similar causes and effects at a dinner table? I confess, a piece of mutton

has supplied me with arguments, as well as chops, for a week; I have seen a hare or a cod's-head giving hints to a friend for his next Essay; and have known the most solemn reflections rise, with a pair of claws, out of a pigeon-pie.

There are two or three heads, however, under which all our subjects may be classed; and these it will be proper to mention, not so much for the necessity of any such classification as for an indication of the particular views and feelings with which we may handle them. The first is Manners, or the surface of society,—the second Morals, metaphysically considered, or its inmost causes of action,—the third Taste, or its right feeling upon things both external and internal, which lies, as it were, between both.

With regard to the first, we are aware, and must advise the reader, that we do not possess so much food for observation as the authors of the earlier periodical works; and this is the case, not merely because we have not been in the habit of living so much as they did out in society, but because manners are of a more level surface than they were in their times, and people's characters have, in a manner, been polished out. In fact, this is owing in great measure to the very writers in question. The extension of a general knowledge and good breeding were their direct objects; they succeeded; and there is not a domestic party now-

a-days, in high life or in middle, but, in its freedom from its grossness, and its tincture of literature, is indebted to Steele and his associates. The good was great and universal, and should alone render those men immortal, even without all the other claims of their wit and character.

Every general advantage, however, of this kind, has a tendency to overdo itself. A certain degree of knowledge and politeness being within every body's power, sufficient to enable them to pass smoothly with each other, every thing further is at last neglected ; character first gives way to polish ; polish by little and little carries away solidity ; and all the community, who are to be acted upon in this way, are at length in danger of resembling so much worn-out coin, which has not only lost the features upon it, and grown blank by attrition, but begins to be weighed and found wanting even for the common purposes of society.

As far, then, as our observations on Manners go, it will be our endeavour to counteract this extreme. Our mode of proceeding will be best explained by itself ; but we shall endeavour to set men, not upon disliking smoothness, but avoiding insipidity, — not upon starting into roughness, but overcoming a flimsy sameness, — and this, too, not by pretending to characters which they have not, but by letting their own

be seen as far as they possess them, and once more having faces to know them by.

Taste, as was inevitable, has sympathized completely with this superficial state of manners. In proportion as men were all to resemble each other, and to have faces and manners in common, their self-love was not to be disturbed by any thing in the shape of individuality. A writer might be natural, but he was to be natural only as far as their sense of nature would go, and this was not a great way. Besides, even when he was natural, he hardly dared to be so in language as well as idea ;—there gradually came up a kind of dress, in which a man's mind, as well as body, was to clothe itself ; and the French, whose wretched sophisticated taste had been first introduced by political circumstances, saw it increasing every day under the characteristic title of polite criticism, till they condescended to acknowledge that we were behaving ourselves well,—that Mr. Pope was a truly harmonious poet, and that Mr. Addison's *Cato* made amends for the barbarism of Shakspeare. The praises, indeed, bestowed by the French in these and similar instances, went in one respect to a fortunate extreme, and tended to rouse a kind of national contradiction, which has perhaps not been without its effect in keeping a better spirit alive : but it must not be concealed that both Shakspeare and Milton have owed a great part of their reputation of late years to causes which,

though of a distinct nature, have been unconnected with a direct poetical taste. I allude to the art of acting with regard to the former, and to certain doctrines of religion with respect to the latter; both of which have no more to do with the fine spirit of either poet than a jack-o'-lantern, or a jugged hare. Milton still remains unknown to the better classes, in comparison with succeeding writers; and Chaucer and Spenser, the two other great poets of England, who have had no such recommendations to the pursuits or prejudices of society, are scarcely known at all, especially with any thing like an apprehension of their essential qualities. Chaucer is considered as a rude sort of poet, who wrote a vast while ago, and is no longer intelligible; and Spenser, a prosing one, not quite so old, who wrote nothing but allegories. They startle to hear that the latter has very little need of the glossary, and is dipped in poetic luxury; and that the former, besides being intelligible with a little attention, is in some respects a kindred spirit with Shakspeare, for gravity as well as for mirth, and full of the most exquisite feeling of all kinds, especially the pathetic. It is curious, indeed, to see the length to which the levelling spirit in manners, and the coxcombical sort of exclusiveness it produces, have carried people in their habitual ideas of writers not of their generation. Nothing is young and in full vigour but themselves. Shakspeare may enjoy a lucky per-

petuity of lustihead by means of school-compilations and stage-players; and Milton, in their imaginations, is a respectable middle-aged gentleman, something like the clergyman who preaches on Sundays; but Spenser is exceedingly quaint and rusty; and Chaucer is nothing but *old Chaucer* or honest Geoffrey, which is about as pleasant, though not intended to be so, as the lover's address to the sun in the *Gentle Shepherd* :—

“ And if ye're wearied, *honest light*,
Sleep, gin ye like, a week that night.”

You will even find them talking, with an air of patronage, of having found something good now and then in *these old writers*,—meaning the great masters above-mentioned, and the working heads that crowded the time of Shakspeare. They evidently present them to their minds as so many old gentlemen and grandfathers, half-doating; and, for aught I know, would think of Apollo himself in the same way, if it were not for Tooke's Pantheon, or an occasional plaster cast. As if perpetual youth, instead of age, was not the inheritance of immortal genius! As if a great poet could ever grow old, as long as Nature herself was young!

But I must restrain myself on this subject, or I shall exceed my limits. The reader will see that we are prepared to say a great deal of “these old poets;” and we are so,—not because

they are old, but because they are beautiful and ever fresh. We shall also do as much for some of the old prose-writers; and endeavour, by means of both, and of the universal principles which inspired them, to wean the general taste, as far as we can, from the lingering influence of the French school back again to that of the English, or, in other words, from the poetry of modes and fashions to that of fancy, and feeling, and all-surviving Nature. We have had enough, in all conscience, of men who talk away, and write smoothly, and everlasting copy each other; — let us, in the name of variety, if of nothing else, have a little of men who held it necessary to think and speak for themselves,— men who went to the fountain-head of inspiration, where the stream wept and sparkled away at its pleasure, and not where it was cut out into artificial channels, and sent smoothing up, pert and monotonous, through a set of mechanical pipes and eternally repeated images.

On the subject of Morals, which is one that requires the nicest developement, and will be treated by us with proportionate care and sincerity, we shall content ourselves with saying at present that, if we differ on this point also from the opinions of our predecessors and others, it is only where we think them hurtful to the real interests of charity and self-knowledge, and where they have made a compromise, to no real purpose, with existing prejudices. Here, as well

as in Manners, we shall endeavour to pierce below the surface of things, but only to fetch out what we conceive to be a more valuable substance, and fitter for the kindlier purposes of intercourse. We may disturb the complacency of some exquisitely self-satisfied persons, and startle into a God-bless-me, or so (which we should be sorry to do over their tea-cups), a number of worthy people, who lament that every body does not resemble them: but the world have too long, even when most professing to be charitable, been taught to value themselves at the expense of others; and, perhaps, in our old zeal for the many instead of the few, we shall endeavour to reverse this kind of beginning at home, and exhort them to think somewhat better of others, even at a little expense to themselves.

In short, to recommend an independent simplicity in Manners, a love of nature in Taste, and truth, generosity, and self-knowledge in Morals, will be the object, dining or fasting, with blade in hand or with pen, of the Knights of the Round Table.

L. H.

No. III.

ON THE LOVE OF LIFE.

It is our intention, in the course of these papers, occasionally to expose certain vulgar errors,

which have crept into our reasonings on men and manners. Perhaps one of the most interesting of these is that which relates to the source of our general attachment to life. We are not going to enter into the question, whether life is, on the whole, to be regarded as a blessing, though we are by no means inclined to adopt the opinion of that sage who thought "that the best thing that could have happened to a man was never to have been born, and the next best, to have died the moment after he came into existence." The common argument, however, which is made use of to prove the value of life, from the strong desire which almost every one feels for its continuance, appears to be altogether inconclusive. The wise and the foolish, the weak and the strong, the lame and the blind, the prisoner and the free, the prosperous and the wretched, the beggar and the king, the rich and the poor, the young and the old, from the little child who tries to leap over his own shadow, to the old man who stumbles blindfold on his grave, all feel this desire in common. Our notions with respect to the importance of life, and our attachment to it, depend on a principle which has very little to do with its happiness or its misery.

The love of life is, in general, the effect not of our enjoyments, but of our passions. We are not attached to it so much for its own sake, or as it is connected with happiness, as because it is necessary to action. Without life there can

be no action—no objects of pursuit—no restless desires—no tormenting passions. Hence it is that we fondly cling to it—that we dread its termination as the close, not of enjoyment, but of hope. The proof that our attachment to life is not absolutely owing to the immediate satisfaction we find in it is that those persons are commonly found most loath to part with it who have the least enjoyment of it, and who have the greatest difficulties to struggle with, as losing gamesters are the most desperate. And farther, there are not many persons who, with all their pretended love of life, would not, if it had been in their power, have melted down the longest life to a few hours. “The school-boy,” says Addison, “counts the time till the return of the holidays; the minor longs to be of age; the lover is impatient till he is married.”—“Hope and fantastic expectations spend much of our lives; and while with passion we look for a coronation, or the death of an enemy, or a day of joy, passing from fancy to possession without any intermediate notices, we throw away a precious year.”

JEREMY TAYLOR.—We would willingly, and without remorse, sacrifice not only the present moment, but all the interval (no matter how long) that separates us from any favourite object. We chiefly look upon life, then, as the means to an end. Its common enjoyments and its daily evils are alike disregarded for any idle purpose we have in view. It should seem as if there were a

few green sunny spots in the desert of life, to which we are always hastening forward: we eye them wistfully in the distance, and care not what perils or suffering we endure, so that we arrive at them at last. However weary we may be of the same stale round—however sick of the past—however hopeless of the future—the mind still revolts at the thought of death, because the fancied possibility of good, which always remains with life, gathers strength as it is about to be torn from us for ever, and the dullest scene looks bright compared with the darkness of the grave. Our reluctance to part with existence evidently does not depend on the calm and even current of our lives, but on the force and impulse of the passions. Hence that indifference to death which has been sometimes remarked in people who lead a solitary and peaceful life in remote and barren districts. The pulse of life in them does not beat strong enough to occasion any violent revulsion of the frame when it ceases. He who treads the green mountain turf, or he who sleeps beneath it, enjoys an almost equal quiet. The death of those persons has always been accounted happy who had attained their utmost wishes, who had nothing left to regret or to desire. Our repugnance to death increases in proportion to our consciousness of having lived in vain—to the violence of our efforts, and the keenness of our disappointments—and to our earnest desire to find in the future, if possible,

a rich amends for the past. We may be said to nurse our existence with the greatest tenderness, according to the pain it has cost us ; and feel at every step of our varying progress the truth of that line of the poet—

“ An ounce of sweet is worth a pound of sour.”

The love of life is in fact the sum of all our passions and of all our enjoyments ; but these are by no means the same thing, for the vehemence of our passions is irritated, not less by disappointment than by the prospect of success. Nothing seems to be a match for this general tenaciousness of existence but such an extremity either of bodily or mental suffering as destroys at once the power both of habit and imagination. In short, the question, whether life is accompanied with a greater quantity of pleasure or pain, may be fairly set aside as frivolous, and of no practical utility ; for our attachment to life depends on our interest in it ; and it cannot be denied that we have more interest in this moving, busy scene, agitated with a thousand hopes and fears, and checkered with every diversity of joy and sorrow, than in a dreary blank. To be something is better than to be nothing, because we can feel no interest in *nothing*. Passion, imagination, self-will, the sense of power, the very consciousness of our existence, bind us to life, and hold us fast in its chains, as by a magic spell, in spite of every other consideration. No-

thing can be more philosophical than the reasoning which Milton puts into the mouth of the fallen angel :—

—“ And that must end us, that must be our cure,
To be no more ; sad cure ! for who would lose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
To perish rather, swallow'd up and lost
In the wide womb of uncreated night,
Devoid of sense and motion ? ”

Nearly the same account may be given in answer to the question which has been asked, *Why so few tyrants kill themselves?* In the first place, they are never satisfied with the mischief they have done, and cannot quit their hold of power, after all sense of pleasure is fled. Besides, they absurdly argue from the means of happiness placed within their reach to the end itself ; and, dazzled by the pomp and pageantry of a throne, cannot relinquish the persuasion that they *ought* to be happier than other men. The prejudice of opinion, which attaches us to life, is in them stronger than in others, and incorrigible to experience. The Great are life's fools--dupes of the splendid shadows that surround them, and wedded to the very mockeries of opinion.

Whatever is our situation or pursuit in life, the result will be much the same. The strength of the passions seldom corresponds to the pleasure we find in its indulgence. The miser

“robs himself to increase his store ;” the ambitious man toils up a slippery precipice only to be tumbled headlong from its height : the lover is infatuated with the charms of his mistress, exactly in proportion to the mortifications he has received from her. Even those who succeed in nothing, who, as it has been emphatically expressed—

—“ Are made desperate by too quick a sense
Of constant infelicity ; cut off
From peace, like exiles, on some barren rock,
Their life’s sad prison, with no more of ease,
Than sentinels between two armies set ;”

are yet as unwilling as others to give over the unprofitable strife : their harassed feverish existence refuses rest, and frets the languor of exhausted hope into the torture of unavailing regret. The exile, who has been unexpectedly restored to his country and to liberty, often finds his courage fail with the accomplishment of all his wishes, and the struggle of life and hope ceases at the same instant.

We once more repeat that we do not, in the foregoing remarks, mean to enter into a comparative estimate of the value of human life, but merely to shew that the strength of our attachment to it is a very fallacious test of its happiness.

W. H.

No. IV.

ON CLASSICAL EDUCATION.

THE study of the Classics is less to be regarded as an exercise of the intellect than as "a discipline of humanity." The peculiar advantage of this mode of education consists not so much in strengthening the understanding as in softening and refining the taste. It gives men liberal views; it accustoms the mind to take an interest in things foreign to itself; to love virtue for its own sake; to prefer fame to life, and glory to riches; and to fix our thoughts on the remote and permanent, instead of narrow and fleeting objects. It teaches us to believe that there is something really great and excellent in the world, surviving all the shocks of accident and fluctuations of opinion, and raises us above that low and servile fear, which bows only to present power and upstart authority. Rome and Athens filled a place in the history of mankind, which can never be occupied again. They were two cities set on a hill, which could not be hid; all eyes have seen them, and their light shines like a mighty sea-mark into the abyss of time.

" Still green with bays each ancient altar stands,
 Above the reach of sacrilegious hands;
 Secure from flames, from envy's fiercer rage,
 Destructive war, and all-involving age.
 Hail, bards triumphant, born in happier days,
 Immortal heirs of universal praise!
 Whose honours with increase of ages grow,
 As streams roll down, enlarging as they flow!"

It is this feeling, more than any thing else, which produces a marked difference between the study of the ancient and modern languages, and which, from the weight and importance of the consequences attached to the former, stamps every word with a monumental firmness. By conversing with the *mighty dead*, we imbibe sentiment with knowledge. We become strongly attached to those who can no longer either hurt or serve us, except through the influence which they exert over the mind. We feel the presence of that power which gives immortality to human thoughts and actions, and catch the flame of enthusiasm from all nations and ages.

It is hard to find in minds otherwise formed, either a real love of excellence, or a belief that any excellence exists superior to their own. Every thing is brought down to the vulgar level of their own ideas and pursuits. Persons without education certainly do not want either acuteness or strength of mind in what concerns themselves, or in things immediately within their observation ; but they have no power of abstraction, no general standard of taste, or scale of opinion. They see their objects always near, and never in the horizon. Hence arises that egotism which has been remarked as the characteristic of self-taught men, and which degenerates into obstinate prejudice or petulant fickleness of opinion, according to the natural sluggishness or activity of their minds. For

they either become blindly bigotted to the first opinions they have struck out for themselves, and inaccessible to conviction; or else (the dupes of their own vanity and shrewdness) are everlasting converts to every crude suggestion that presents itself, and the last opinion is always the true one. Each successive discovery flashes upon them with equal light and evidence, and every new fact overturns their whole system. It is among this class of persons, whose ideas never extend beyond the feeling of the moment, that we find partizans, who are very honest men, with a total want of principle, and who unite the most hardened effrontery, and intolerance of opinion, to endless inconsistency and self-contradiction.

A celebrated political writer of the present day, who is a great enemy to classical education, is a remarkable instance both of what can and what cannot be done without it.

It has been attempted of late to set up a distinction between the education *of words*, and the education *of things*, and to give the preference in all cases to the latter. But, in the first place, the knowledge of things, or of the realities of life, is not easily to be taught except by things themselves, and, even if it were, is not so absolutely indispensable as it has been supposed. "The world is too much with us, early and late;" and the fine dream of our youth is best prolonged among the visionary

objects of antiquity. We owe many of our most amiable delusions, and some of our superiority, to the grossness of mere physical existence, to the strength of our associations with words. Language, if it throws a veil over our ideas, adds a softness and refinement to them, like that which the atmosphere gives to naked objects. There can be no true elegance without taste in style. In the next place, we mean absolutely to deny the application of the principle of utility to the present question. By an obvious transposition of ideas, some persons have confounded a knowledge of useful things with useful knowledge. Knowledge is only useful in itself as it exercises or gives pleasure to the mind: the only knowledge that is of use, in a practical sense, is professional knowledge. But knowledge, considered as a branch of general education, can be of use only to the mind of the person acquiring it. If the knowledge of language produces pedants, the other kind of knowledge (which is proposed to be substituted for it) can only produce quacks. There is no question but that the knowledge of astronomy, of chemistry, and of agriculture, is highly useful to the world, and absolutely necessary to be acquired by persons carrying on certain professions: but the practical utility of a knowledge of these subjects ends there. For example, it is of the utmost importance to the navigator to know exactly in what degree

of longitude and latitude such a rock lies: but to us, sitting here about our Round Table, it is not of the smallest consequence whatever whether the map-maker has placed it an inch to the right or to the left; we are in no danger of running against it. So the art of making shoes is a highly useful art, and very proper to be known and practised by somebody: that is, by the shoe-maker. But to pretend that every one else should be thoroughly acquainted with the whole process of this ingenious handicraft, as one branch of useful knowledge, would be proposterous. It is sometimes asked, What is the use of poetry? and we have heard the argument carried on almost like a parody on *Falstaff's* reasoning about Honour. "Can it set a leg? No. Or an arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No. Poetry hath no skill in surgery, then? No." It is likely that the most enthusiastic lover of poetry would so far agree to the truth of this statement that, if he had just broken a leg, he would send for a surgeon, instead of a volume of poems from a library. But "they that are whole need not a physician." The reasoning would be well founded, if we lived in an hospital, and not in the world.

W. H.

No. V.

ON COMMON-PLACE PEOPLE.

AGREEABLY to our chivalrous, as well as domestic, character, and in order to shew further in what sort of spirit we shall hereafter confer blame and praise,—whom we shall cut up for the benefit of humanity, and to whom apply our healing balsams, we have thought fit, in our present Number, to take the part of a very numerous and ill-treated body of persons, known by the various appellations of common-place people,—dull fellows,—or people who have nothing to say.

It is perhaps wrong, indeed, to call these persons common-place. Those who are the most vehement in objecting to them have the truest right to the title, however little they may suspect it; but of this more hereafter. It is a name by which the others are very commonly known; though they might rather be called persons of simple common sense, and, in fact, have just enough of that valuable quality to inspire them with the very quietness which brings them into so much contempt.

We need not, however, take any pains to describe a set of people so well known. They are, of course, what none of our readers are, but many are acquainted with. They are the more silent part of companies, and generally the best behaved people at table. They are the best of

dumb waiters near the lady of the house. They are always at leisure to help you to good things, if not to say them. They will supply your absence of mind for you while you are talking, and believe you are taking sugar for pepper. Above all,—which ought to recommend them to the very hardest of their antagonists,—they are uninquiring laughers at jokes, and most exemplary listeners.

Now, we do not say that these are the very best of companions, or that when we wished to be particularly amused or informed we should invite them to our houses, or go to see them at theirs ; all we demand is that they should be kindly and respectfully treated when they are by, and not insolently left out of the pale of discourse, purely because they may not bring with them as much as they find, or say as brilliant things as we imagine we do ourselves.

This is one of the faults of over-civilization. In a stage of society like the present, there is an intellectual as well as personal coxcombry apt to prevail, which leads people to expect from each other a certain dashing turn of mind, and an appearance, at least, of having ideas, whether they can afford them or not. Their minds endeavour to put on intelligent attitudes, just as their bodies do graceful ones ; and every one who, from conscious modesty, or from not thinking about the matter, does not play the same monkey tricks with his natural deficiency,

is set down for a dull fellow, and treated with a sort of scornful resentment, for differing with the others. It is equally painful and amusing to see how the latter will look upon an honest fellow of this description, if they happen to find him in a company where they think he has no business. On the first entrance of one of these intolerant men of wisdom,—to see, of course, a brilliant friend of his,—he concludes that all the party are equally lustrous ; but finding, by degrees, no flashes from an unfortunate gentleman on his right, he turns stiffly towards him at the first common-place remark, measures him from head to foot with a kind of wondering indifference, and then falls to stirring his tea with a half-inquiring glance at the rest of the company, —just as much as to say, “a fellow not overburthened, eh ?”—or, “ who the devil has Tom got here ?”

Like all who are tyrannically given, and of a bullying turn of mind,—which is by no means confined to those who talk loudest,—these persons are apt to be as obsequious and dumbstricken before men of whom they have a lofty opinion as they are otherwise in the case above-mentioned. This, indeed, is not always the case ; but you may sometimes find out one of the cast by seeing him waiting with open mouth and impatient eyes for the brilliant things which the great Gentleman to whom he has been introduced is bound to utter. The party, perhaps, are wait-

ing for dinner, and as silent as most Englishmen, not very well known to each other, are upon such occasions. Our hero waits with impatience to hear the celebrated person open his mouth, and is at length gratified; but not hearing very distinctly, asks his next neighbour, in a serious and earnest whisper, what it was.

Pray, Sir, what was it that Mr. W. said?

He says, that it is particularly cold.

Oh—particularly cold.

The Gentleman thinks this no very profound remark for so great a man, but puts on as patient a face as he can, and, refreshing himself with shifting one knee over the other, waits anxiously for the next observation. After a little silence, broken only by a hem or two, and by somebody's begging pardon of a gentleman next him for touching his shoe, Mr. W. is addressed by a friend, and the stranger is all attention.

By the by, W., how did you get home last night?

Oh very well, thank'ye; I could'nt get a coach, but it was'nt very rainy, and I was soon there, and jumped into bed.

Ah—there's nothing like bed after getting one's coat wet.

Nothing, indeed. I had the clothes round me in a twinkling, and in two minutes was as fast as a church.

Here the conversation drops again; and our

delighter in intellect cannot hide from himself his disappointment. The description of pulling the clothes round, he thinks, might have been much more piquant ; and the simile—as fast as a church—appears to him wonderfully commonplace from a man of wit. But such is his misfortune. He has no eyes but for something sparkling or violent ; and no more expects to find any thing simple in genius than any thing tolerable in the want of it.

Persons impatient of other's deficiencies are in fact likely to be equally undiscerning of their merits ; and are not aware, in either case, how much they are exposing the deficiencies on their own side. Not only, however, do they get into this dilemma, but, what is more, they are lowering their respectability beneath that of the dullest person in the room. They shew themselves deficient, not merely in the qualities they miss in him, but in those which he really possesses, such as self-knowledge and good temper. Were they as wise as they pretend to be, they would equal him in these points, and know how to extract something good from him in spite of his deficiency in the other ; for intellectual qualities are not the only ones that excite the reflections, or conciliate the regard, of the truly intelligent,—of those who can study human nature in all its bearings, and love it, or sympathize with it, for all its affections. The best part of pleasure is the communication of it. Why must we be

perpetually craving for amusement or information from others (an appetite which, after all, will be seldom acknowledged), and never think of bestowing them ourselves? Again, as the best part of pleasure is that we have just mentioned, the best proof of intellectual power is that of extracting fertility from barrenness, or so managing the least cultivated mind, which we may happen to stumble upon, as to win something from it. Setting even this talent aside, there are occasions when it is refreshing to escape from the turmoil and final nothingness of the understanding, and repose upon that contentedness of mediocrity which seems to have attained its end without the trouble of wisdom. It has often delighted me to observe a profound thinker of my acquaintance, when a good-natured person of ordinary understanding has been present. He is reckoned severe, as it is called in many of his opinions; and is thought particularly to overrate his intellectual qualities in general; and yet it is beautiful to see how he will let down his mind to the other's level, taking pleasure in his harmless enjoyment, and assenting to a thousand truisms, one after another, as familiar to him as his finger-ends. The reason is that he pierces deeper into the nature of the human being beside him, can make his very deficiencies subservient to his own speculations, and, above all, knows that there is something worth all the knowledge upon earth,—which is

happiness and a genial nature. It is thus that the sunshine of happy faces is reflected upon our own. We may even find a beam of it in every thing that Heaven looks upon. The dullest minds do not vegetate for nothing, any more than the grass in a green lawn. We do not require the trees to talk with us, or get impatient at the monotonous quiet of the fields and hedges. We love them for their contrast to noise and bustle, for their presenting to us something native and elementary, for the peaceful thoughts they suggest to us, and the part they bear in the various beauty of creation.

Is a bird's feather exhibited in company, or a piece of sea-weed, or a shell that contained the stupidest of created beings,—every one is happy to look at it, and the most fastidious pretender in the room will delight to expatiate on its beauty and contrivance. Let this teach him charity and good sense, and inform him that it is the grossest of all coxcombry to dwell with admiration on a piece of insensibility, however beautiful, and find nothing to excite pleasing or profitable reflections in the commonest of his fellow men.

L. H.

No. VI.

ON POSTHUMOUS FAME,—

WHETHER SHAKSPEARE WAS INFLUENCED
BY A LOVE OF IT?

IT has been much disputed whether Shakspeare was actuated by the love of fame, though the question has been thought by others not to admit of any doubt, on the ground that it was impossible for any man of great genius to be without this feeling. It was supposed that that immortality, which was the natural inheritance of men of powerful genius, must be ever present to their mind, as the reward, the object, and the animating spring, of all their efforts. This conclusion does not appear to be well founded, and that for the following reasons:—

First, The love of fame is the offspring of taste, rather than of genius. The love of fame implies a knowledge of its existence. The men of the greatest genius, whether poets or philosophers, who lived in the first ages of society, only just emerging from the gloom of ignorance and barbarism, could not be supposed to have much idea of those long trails of lasting glory which they were to leave behind them, and of which there were as yet no examples. But, after such men, inspired by the love of truth and nature, have struck out those lights which become the gaze and admiration of after times,—when those

who succeed, in distant generations, read with wondering rapture the works which the bards and sages of antiquity have bequeathed to them,—when they contemplate the imperishable power of intellect which survives the stroke of death and the revolutions of empire,—it is then that the passion for fame becomes an habitual feeling in the mind, and that men naturally wish to excite the same sentiments of admiration in others which they themselves have felt, and to transmit their names with the same honours to posterity. It is from the fond enthusiastic veneration with which we recal the names of the celebrated men of past times, and the idolatrous worship we pay to their memories, that we learn what a delicious thing fame is, and would willingly make any efforts or sacrifices to be thought of in the same way. It is in the true spirit of this feeling that a modern writer exclaims—

“Blessings be with them, and eternal praise,
The poets—who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight in deathless lays !
Oh ! might my name be number’d among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days !”

The love of fame is a species of emulation ; or, in other words, the love of admiration is in proportion to the admiration with which the works of the highest genius have inspired us, to the delight we have received from their habitual contemplation, and to our participation in the general enthusiasm with which they have been

regarded by mankind. Thus there is little of this feeling discoverable in the Greek writers, whose ideas of posthumous fame seem to have been confined to the glory of heroic actions; whereas the Roman poets and orators, stimulated by the reputation which their predecessors had acquired, and having those exquisite models constantly before their eyes, are full of it. So Milton, whose capacious mind was embued with the rich stores of sacred and of classic lore, to whom learning opened her inmost page, and whose eye seemed to be ever bent back to the great models of antiquity, was, it is evident, deeply impressed with a feeling of lofty emulation, and a strong desire to produce some work of lasting and equal reputation:—

“Nor sometimes forget
Those other two, equall'd with me in fate,
So were I equall'd with them in renown,
Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides,
And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old.”*

Spenser, who was a man of learning, had a high opinion of the regard due to “famous poets’ wit;” and Lord Bacon, whose vanity is as well known as his excessive adulation of that of others, asks, in a tone of proud exultation, “Have not the poems of Homer lasted five-and-twenty hundred years, and not a syllable of them

* See also the passage in his prose works relating to the first design of *Paradise Lost*.

is lost?" Chaucer seems to have derived his notions of fame more immediately from the reputation acquired by the Italian poets, his contemporaries, which had at that time spread itself over Europe; while the latter, who were the first to unlock the springs of ancient learning, and who slaked their thirst of knowledge at that pure fountain-head, would naturally imbibe the same feeling from its highest source. Thus, Dante has conveyed the finest image that can perhaps be conceived of the power of this principle over the human mind, when he describes the heroes and celebrated men of antiquity as "serene and smiling," though in the shades of death,

"Because on earth their names
In fame's eternal volume shine for aye."

But it is not so in Shakspeare. There is scarcely the slightest trace of any such feeling in his writings, nor any appearance of anxiety for their fate, or of a desire to perfect them, or make them worthy of that immortality to which they were destined. And this indifference may be accounted for from the very circumstance that he was almost entirely a man of genius, or that in him this faculty bore sway over every other: he was either not intimately conversant with the productions of the great writers who had gone before him, or at least was not much indebted to them: he revelled in the world of observation and of fancy; and per-

haps his mind was of too prolific and active a kind to dwell with intense and continued interest on the images of beauty or of grandeur presented to it by the genius of others. He seemed scarcely to have an individual existence of his own, but to borrow that of others at will, and to pass successively through "every variety of untried being,"—to be now *Hamlet*, now *Othello*, now *Lear*, now *Falstaff*, now *Ariel*. In the mingled interests and feelings belonging to this wide range of imaginary reality, in the tumult and rapid transitions of this waking dream, the author could not easily find time to think of himself, nor wish to embody that personal identity in idle reputation after death, of which he was so little tenacious while living. To feel a strong desire that others should think highly of us, it is, in general, necessary that we should think highly of ourselves. There is something of egotism, and even pedantry, in this sentiment; and there is no author who was so little tinctured with these as Shakspeare. The passion for fame, like other passions, requires an exclusive and exaggerated admiration of its object, and attaches more consequence to literary attainments and pursuits than they really possess. Shakspeare had looked too much abroad into the world, and his views of things were of too universal and comprehensive a cast, not to have taught him to estimate the importance of posthumous fame, according to its true value and relative proportions. Though

he might have some conception of his future fame, he could not but feel the contrast between that and his actual situation; and, indeed, he complains bitterly of the latter in one of his sonnets.* He would perhaps think, that, to be the idol of posterity, when we are no more, was hardly a full compensation for being the object of the glance and scorn of fools while we are living; and that, in truth, this universal fame, so much vaunted, was a vague phantom of blind enthusiasm; for what is the amount even of Shakspeare's fame?—That, in that very country which boasts his genius and his birth, perhaps not one person in ten has ever heard of his name, or read a syllable of his writings!

We will add another observation connected with this subject, which is that men of the greatest genius produce their works with too much facility (and, as it were, spontaneously) to require the love of fame as a stimulus to their

* "Oh! for my sake do you with fortune chide,
The guilty goddess of my harmless deeds,
That did not better for my life provide
Than public means which public manners breeds.
Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand."

At another time, we find him "desiring this man's art, and that man's scope :" so little was Shakspeare, as far as we can learn, enamoured of himself!

exertions, or to make them seem deserving of the admiration of mankind as their reward. It is, indeed, one characteristic mark of the highest class of excellence to appear to come naturally from the mind of the author, without consciousness or effort. The work seems like inspiration—to be the gift of some God, or of the Muse. But it is the sense of difficulty which enhances the admiration of power, both in ourselves and in others. Hence it is that there is nothing so remote from vanity as true genius. It is almost as natural for those who are endowed with the highest powers of the human mind to produce the miracles of art, as for other men to breathe or move. Correggio, who is said to have produced some of his divinest works almost without having seen a picture, probably did not know that he had done anything extraordinary.

W. H.

No. VII.

ON MANNER.

IT was the opinion of Lord Chesterfield that *manner* is of more importance than *matter*. This opinion seems at least to be warranted by the practice of the world; nor do we think it so entirely without foundation as some persons

of more solid, than shewy, pretensions would make us believe. In the remarks which we are going to make, we can scarcely hope to have any party very warmly on our side; for the most superficial coxcomb would be thought to owe his success to sterling merit.

What any person says or does is one thing; the mode in which he says or does it is another. The last of these is what we understand by *manner*. In other words, manner is the involuntary or incidental expression given to our thoughts and sentiments by looks, tones, and gestures. Now, we are inclined in many cases to prefer this latter mode of judging of what passes in the mind to more positive and formal proof, were it for no other reason than that it is involuntary. "Look," says Lord Chesterfield, "in the face of the person to whom you are speaking, if you wish to know his real sentiments; for he can command his words more easily than his countenance." We may perform certain actions from design, or repeat certain professions by rote: the manner of doing either will in general be the best test of our sincerity. The mode of conferring a favour is often thought of more value than the favour itself. The actual obligation may spring from a variety of questionable motives, vanity, affectation, or interest: the cordiality with which the person from whom you have received it asks you how you do, or shakes you by the hand, does not

admit of misinterpretation. The manner of doing any thing is that which marks the degree and force of our internal impressions ; it emanates most directly from our immediate or habitual feelings ; it is that which stamps its life and character on any action :—the rest may be performed by an automaton. What is it that makes the difference between the best and the worst actor, but the manner of going through the same part ? The one has a perfect idea of the degree and force with which certain feelings operate in nature, and the other has no idea at all of the workings of passion. There would be no difference between the worst actor in the world and the best, placed in real circumstances, and under the influence of real passion. A writer may express the thoughts he has borrowed from another, but not with the same force, unless he enters into the true spirit of them. Otherwise he will resemble a person reading what he does not understand, whom you immediately detect by his wrong emphasis. His illustrations will be literally exact, but misplaced and awkward ; he will not gradually warm with his subject, nor feel the force of what he says, nor produce the same effect on his readers. An author's style is not less a criterion of his understanding than his sentiments. The same story told by two different persons shall, from the difference of the manner, either set the table in a roar, or not relax a feature in the

whole company. We sometimes complain (perhaps rather unfairly) that particular persons possess more vivacity than wit. But we ought to take into the account that their very vivacity arises from their enjoying the joke; and their humouring a story by drollery of gesture or archness of look, shews only that they are acquainted with the different ways in which the sense of the ludicrous expresses itself. It is not the mere dry jest, but the relish which the person himself has of it, with which we sympathize. For in all that tends to pleasure and excitement, the capacity for enjoyment is the principal point. One of the most pleasant and least tiresome persons of our acquaintance is a humourist, who has three or four quaint witticisms and proverbial phrases, which he always repeats over and over; but he does this with just the same vivacity and freshness as ever, so that you feel the same amusement with less effort than if he had startled his hearers with a succession of original conceits. Another friend of ours, who never fails to give vent to one or two real *jeu-d'esprits* every time you meet him, from the pain with which he is delivered of them, and the uneasiness he seems to suffer all the rest of the time, makes a much more interesting than comfortable companion. If you see a person in pain for himself, it naturally puts you in pain for him. The art of pleasing consists in being pleased. To be amiable is to be sa-

tisfied with one's self and others. Good-humour is essential to pleasantry. It is this circumstance, among others, that renders the wit of Rabelais so much more delightful than that of Swift, who, with all his satire, is "as dry as the remainder biscuit after a voyage." In society, good-temper and animal spirits are nearly every thing. They are of more importance than sallies of wit, or refinements of understanding. They give a general tone of cheerfulness and satisfaction to the company. The French have the advantage over us in external manners. They breathe a lighter air, and have a brisker circulation of the blood. They receive and communicate their impressions more freely. The interchange of ideas costs them less. Their constitutional gaiety is a kind of natural intoxication, which does not require any other stimulus. The English are not so well off in this respect; and *Falstaff's* commendation on sack was evidently intended for his countrymen,—whose "learning is often a mere hoard of gold kept by a devil, till wine commences it, and sets it in act and use."* More undertakings fail for want of spirit than for want of sense. Confidence gives a fool the advantage over a wise man. In general, a strong passion

* "A good sherris-sack hath a two-fold operation in it; it ascends me into the brain, dries me there all the foolish, dull, and crudy vapours which environ it; and makes it apprehensive, quick, forgetive, full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes, which, delivered over to the tongue, becomes excellent wit," &c.—*Second Part of Henry IV.*

for any object will ensure success, for the desire of the end will point out the means. We apprehend that people usually complain, without reason, of not succeeding in various pursuits according to their deserts. Such persons, we will grant, may have great merit in all other respects; but in that in which they fail, it will almost invariably hold true that they do not deserve to succeed. For instance, a person who has spent his life in thinking will acquire a habit of reflection; but he will neither become a dancer nor a singer, rich, nor beautiful. In like manner, if any one complains of not succeeding in affairs of gallantry, we will venture to say, it is because he is not gallant. He has mistaken his talent—that's all. If any person of exquisite sensibility makes love awkwardly, it is because he does not feel it as he should. One of these disappointed sentimentalists may very probably feel it upon reflection, may brood over it till he has worked himself up to a pitch of frenzy, and write his mistress the finest love-letters in the world, in her absence; but, be assured, he does not feel an atom of this passion in her presence. If, in paying her a compliment, he frowns with more than usual severity, or, in presenting her with a bunch of flowers, seems as if he was going to turn his back upon her, he can only expect to be laughed at for his pains; nor can he plead an excess of feeling as an excuse for want of common sense. She may say, "It is

not with me you are in love, but with the ridiculous chimeras of your own brain. You are thinking of *Sophia Western*, or some other heroine, and not of me. Go and make love to your romances."

Lord Chesterfield's character of the Duke of Marlborough is a good illustration of his general theory. He says, "Of all the men I ever knew in my life, (and I knew him extremely well,) the late Duke of Marlborough possessed the graces in the highest degree, not to say engrossed them ; for I will venture (contrary to the custom of profound historians, who always assign deep causes for great events) to ascribe the better half of the Duke of Marlborough's greatness and riches to those graces. He was eminently illiterate ; wrote bad English, and spelt it worse. He had no share in what is commonly called parts ; that is, no brightness, nothing shining in his genius. He had most undoubtedly an excellent good plain understanding with sound judgment. But these alone would probably have raised him but something higher than they found him, which was page to King James II.'s Queen. There the graces protected and promoted him ; for while he was ensign of the Guards, the Duchess of Cleveland, then favourite mistress of Charles II., struck by these very graces, gave him five thousand pounds, with which he immediately bought an annuity of five hundred pounds a-year, which was the

foundation of his subsequent fortune. His figure was beautiful, but his manner was irresistible by either man or woman. It was by this engaging graceful manner that he was enabled, during all his wars, to connect the various and jarring powers of the grand alliance, and to carry them on to the main object of the war, notwithstanding their private and separate views, jealousies, and wrongheadedness. Whatever Court he went to, (and he was often obliged to go himself to some resty and refractory ones,) he as constantly prevailed, and brought them into his measures."*

Grace in women has more effect than beauty. We sometimes see a certain fine self-possession, an habitual voluptuousness of character, which reposes on its own sensations, and derives pleasure from all around it, that is more irresistible than any other attraction. There is an air of languid enjoyment in such persons, "in their eyes, in their arms, and their hands, and their face," which robs us of ourselves, and draws us by a secret sympathy towards them. Their minds are a shrine where pleasure reposes. Their smile diffuses a sensation like the breath of spring. Petrarch's description of Laura answers exactly to this character, which is indeed the Italian character. Titian's portraits

* We have an instance in our own times of a man, equally devoid of understanding and principle, but who manages the House of Commons by his *manner* alone.

are full of it: they seem sustained by sentiment, or as if the persons whom he painted sat to music. There is one in the Louvre (or there was) which had the most of this expression we ever remember. It did not look downward; "it looked forward, beyond this world." It was a look that never passed away, but remained unalterable as the deep sentiment which gave birth to it. It is the same constitutional character (together with infinite activity of mind) which has enabled the greatest man in modern history to bear his reverses of fortune with gay magnanimity, and to submit to the loss of the empire of the world with as little discomposure as if he had been playing a game at chess.

Grace has been defined, the outward expression of the inward harmony of the soul. Foreigners have more of this than the English—particularly the people of the southern and eastern countries. Their motions appear (like the expression of their countenances) to have a more immediate communication with their feelings. The inhabitants of the northern climates, compared with these children of the sun, are like hard inanimate machines, with difficulty set in motion. A strolling gipsy will offer to tell your fortune with a grace and an insinuation of address that would be admired in a court.* The

* Mr. Wordsworth, who has written a sonnet to the King on the good that he has done in the last fifty years, has made an attack on a set of gipsies for having done nothing

Hindoos that we see about the streets are another example of this. They are a different race of people from ourselves. They wander

in four-and-twenty hours. "The stars had gone their rounds, but they had not stirred from their place." And why should they, if they were comfortable where they were? We did not expect this turn from Mr. Wordsworth, whom we had considered as the prince of poetical idlers, and patron of the philosophy of indolence, who formerly insisted on our spending our time "in a wise passiveness." Mr. W. will excuse us if we are not converts to his recantation of his original doctrine; for he who changes his opinion loses his authority. We did not look for this Sunday-school philosophy from him. What had he himself been doing in these four-and-twenty hours? Had he been admiring a flower, or writing a sonnet? We hate the doctrine of utility, even in a philosopher, and much more in a poet: for the only real utility is that which leads to enjoyment, and the end is, in all cases, better than the means. A friend of ours, from the north of England, proposed to make Stone-henge of some use, by building houses with it. Mr. W.'s quarrel with the gipsies is an improvement on this extravagance, for the gipsies are the only living monuments of the first ages of society. They are an everlasting source of thought and reflection on the advantages and disadvantages of the progress of civilization: they are a better answer to the cotton manufactories than Mr. W. has given in the "*Excursion*." "They are a grotesque ornament to the civil order." We should be sorry to part with Mr. Wordsworth's poetry, because it amuses and interests us: we should be still sorrier to part with the tents of our old friends, the Bohemian philosophers, because they amuse and interest us more. If any one goes a journey, the principal event in it is his meeting with a party of gipsies. The pleasantest trait in the character of Sir Roger de Coverley is his interview with the gipsy fortune-teller. This is enough.

about in a luxurious dream. They are like part of a glittering procession—like revellers in some gay carnival. Their life is a dance, a measure ; they hardly seem to tread the earth, but are borne along in some more genial element, and bask in the radiance of brighter suns. We may understand this difference of climate by recollecting the difference of our own sensations at different times, in the fine glow of summer, or when we are pinched and dried up by a north-east wind. Even the foolish Chinese, who go about twirling their fans and their windmills, shew the same delight in them as the children they collect around them. The people of the East make it their business to sit and think and do nothing. They indulge in endless reverie ; for the incapacity of enjoyment does not impose on them the necessity of action. There is a striking example of this passion for castle-building in the story of the glass-man in the Arabian Nights.

After all, we would not be understood to say that manner is every thing. Nor would we put Euclid or Sir Isaac Newton on a level with the first *petit-maitre* we might happen to meet. We consider *Æsop's Fables* to have been a greater work of genius than Fontaine's translation of them ; though we doubt whether we should not prefer Fontaine, for his style only, to Gay, who has shewn a great deal of original invention.—The elegant manners of people of fashion have

been objected to us to shew the frivolity of external accomplishments, and the facility with which they are acquired. As to the last point, we demur. There is no class of people who lead so laborious a life, or who take more pains to cultivate their minds as well as persons, than people of fashion. A young lady of quality, who has to devote so many hours a day to music, so many to dancing, so many to drawing, so many to French, Italian, &c., certainly does not pass her time in idleness ; and these accomplishments are afterwards called into action by every kind of external or mental stimulus, by the excitements of pleasure, vanity, and interest. A Ministerial or Opposition Lord goes through more drudgery than half a dozen literary hacks ; nor does a reviewer by profession read half the same number of productions as a modern fine lady is obliged to labour through. We confess, however, we are not competent judges of the degree of elegance or refinement implied in the general tone of fashionable manners. The successful experiment made by *Peregrine Pickle*, in introducing his strolling mistress into genteel company, does not redound greatly to their credit. In point of elegance of external appearance, we see no difference between women of fashion and women of a different character, who dress in the same style.

W. H.

No. VIII.

ON CHAUCER.

WE have great pleasure in giving the Correspondent before us a hearing at our ROUND TABLE. He is fond of Chaucer and the *Arabian Nights* and this is as instant a bond of fellowship with us as talking of dishes with a voluptuary, or of sunshine with a stray Italian, or dolls with a little girl, or of the little girl with her mother, or horses with a buck or a little boy, or those plagues of servants with a housewife, or Horace with a school-boy, or the playhouse with a collegian, or bankrupts with a tradesman, or high breeding with a city beau, or the east wind with an invalid, or snuff with a spare talker, or any thing with a chatterbox, or of pleasant fellows with a pleasant fellow, or of somebody's defects, with those, of course, who have none. Besides, from the nature of our establishment, we have a more than ordinary sympathy with King Cambuscan and his festal board ; we become doubly conscious of our state and dignity, as our Correspondent approaches us with the subject ; and feel as if we were mutually acting the commencement of the story over again,—we, as the king with his men about him, and he, as the strange knight coming up the hall ;—only our visitor retains nothing of that personage but his courtesy ; and we, instead of sitting down, diademed and o'er

canopied, to a course of swans, are obliged to be content with plain heads of hair and a shoulder of mutton.—What further we have to say, we shall keep till he has done speaking.

TO THE PRESIDENT AND COMPANIONS OF
THE ROUND TABLE.

‘Or call up him that left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That own’d the virtuous ring and glass,
And of the wondrous horse of brass,
On which the Tartar King did ride.’

IL PENSERO SO.

GENTLEMEN,—As every inquiry that either the antiquary or the critic has made has been made in vain, we come to the melancholy conclusion that the tale of Chaucer’s accomplished Squire was left half told. Mr. Tyrwhit, to whom the lovers of our ancient Bard are under the greatest obligation, tells us that he has never been able to discover the probable origin of the tale—though he adds, “I should be very hardly brought to believe that the whole, or even any considerable part of it, was of Chaucer’s invention.”

We are not told by that enlightened critic the grounds of this opinion; but we may reasonably infer that he considered it to be of the class of Arabian fictions; and that it was highly pro-

bable it had reached our Poet in some translation, and was adopted by him as matter highly congenial to his splendid fancy, and awaiting only the consecrating powers of his verse. Spenser, who, with Milton, had cast his eye upon this tale with peculiar regret, undertook to give a supplement; but of the deficient parts took that which had the weaker interest. The combat in the lists for Canace perhaps better suited the design of his Faery Queen. It would not be an unprofitable speculation to consider how far the wild *adventures of the horse of brass* were within the grasp of his rich but moral imagination. However, our present inquiry is what supplement may be offered; for it would be too bold to presume that we have settled the very incidents which would have completed this delightful fiction.

Our readers will excuse us for recalling to their minds the actual state of Chaucer's story. The King of Tartary, with his wife, his daughter, and his two sons, are sitting amid the nobles of their court, solemnly holding his anniversary. The board was served so abundantly that the Poet disclaims the task of recounting what "would occupy a somers day." However, while the minstrels are playing their most animated compositions, and the third course had been removed, suddenly, by the hall door, a knight entered upon a steed of brass. He bore in his hand a mirror of glass, on his thumb a ring of

gold, and a naked sword was hanging by his side. He rode at once up to the *highe bord*, and an awful silence was the immediate and natural effect of so extraordinary a visitor. The Knight, it seems, is sent by the King of Araby and Inde to salute Cambuscan on this solemn occasion. The horse and the sword are presents to his Majesty. The mirror and the ring are offered to his lovely daughter. By the one, every danger menacing the state is instantly discerned — treachery is unfolded either in love or politics ; by the other, the language of birds is bestowed upon the wearer, to understand what they say, and to make the suitable replies. The sword of our Knight heals as readily as it wounds, and has certainly been disused by monarchs ever since the days of Cambuscan.

Canace soon puts the virtues of her ring to proof, and, with its lovely disclosures, ends the adventure. The Poet then promises, first to recount the warlike achievements of Cambuscan. He will after *speke of Algarsife*, who won Theodora for his wife, and of the perils from which he was relieved by the horse of brass ; and finally, of Camball fighting in the lists with the Brethren for Canace. Of the horse of brass he tells us nothing but that, after having quietly endured the gaze, and the philosophy too, of the vulgar, it was displayed by the Knight fully to his Majesty, when he no doubt was graciously pleased to express his full admiration ; and then, says Chaucer—

“The hors vanisht, I n’ot in what manere,
Out of hir (*their*) sight, ye get no more of me.”

Let it be recollected that Algarsife won the Princess Theodora for his wife, and that the horse is peculiarly destined to relieve him in his perils.

Our readers see that we consider the tale as an Arabian fiction, and we think that we find adventures in the *Mille et une Nuits* that admirably answer the promise of the Poet, if, indeed, they were not the very inventions which Chaucer designed to adopt. We allude to the story of the *Enchanted Horse*. Let us briefly analyze this fanciful production.

The King of Persia, surrounded by his nobles at Schiraz, is celebrating an important anniversary. An Indian, with an enchanted horse, governed by a pin, (like Chaucer’s) suddenly enters the palace. The king’s son is rashly tempted to make a trial of him. Not having been so attentive as he should have been, and, like many aspiring princes, only knowing how to get into motion, he mounts, and, with more than the speed of an arrow, is instantly hurried from the sight of his anxious parent. His ascent is terrific—mountains become indistinct from his height—he loses every thing terrestrial at last, and is endangered by too close a pressure against the marble floor of heaven. He keeps his seat, however, and, at all events, does not drop his courage in the flight. The first and

most natural thought is that, to descend, the pin must be turned in a mode opposite to that which enabled him to rise. To his infinite dismay, this effort produces no alteration in his course. At length he discovers a second pin in the enchanted courser, and, upon moving it, he descends at night on the terrace of the Princess of Babylon's summer palace. Why should we display their mutual surprise ! The beauty of the princess was a wonder that a horse full of enchantments could never hope to equal, and beauty exerts its usual power even amidst the feasts of magic. He is, however, now anxious to relieve a father's anxiety, and prevails upon the princess to accompany him to Persia. She, captivated with his person, and it may be also that in some degree she was

“Witch'd with noble horsemanship,”

consents to accompany him in a flight which is to terminate in their union. They arrive upon the horse, in perfect safety, at a pleasure-house not far from the capital of Persia. The prince sets out to visit his royal father, and also to announce the unlooked-for partner of his journey. No objections whatever were raised to receiving her at court. The Indian, who, upon the apprehended loss of the prince, had been thrown into prison, is set at liberty. But causeless imprisonment does not always leave the mind full of gratitude for the end of it, and, with the

avenging subtlety of his black character; he hurries instantly to the Princess of Babylon, where she awaits the return of her lover; tells her that he is sent by both king and prince to convey her on the steed, and, as soon as they are mounted, hovers over Schiraz, to announce to his enemy the exquisite consummation of his revenge. With his reluctant companion, the Indian at length arrives at the kingdom of Cashmir. Nothing can be more meritorious in the mind of the king than to punish the robber of a legitimate sovereign; he accordingly puts the Indian to death. But, notwithstanding his indignation at the spoiler, he has no objection to the spoil, and therefore speedily determines to wed the princess himself. She avoids the union by feigning madness. The royal physicians, it may be supposed, are all put in requisition, but they, greatly to the credit of their skill, leave the patient as they found her. Luckily the Prince of Persia, disguised as a Dervise, arrives with the only medicine that could effect her cure. She is soon, as may be supposed, in condition to bear another flight, and then, by a stratagem, regaining the horse of brass, they sublimely ascend together, before the astonished Court of Cashmir, and return once more to Schiraz, and to happiness. Such are the grand features of this beautiful tale.

Surely it would not be very difficult to adapt this most lively fiction to Chaucer's "Cambuscan

bold." The attempt at Chaucer's style and versification might confound the best of us, but there could be no objection to new model and translate the whole into either the rhymed couplet of Dryden, with his vigour and freedom, or perhaps it might grace, and be graced by, the swelling stanza of Spenser.

B.

We sympathize heartily with our Correspondent's wishes to have Chaucer's story completed ; but how or by whom it should be done, it is not perhaps so easy to desire. We have an infinite regard for Spenser ; but, in despite of our love for Italian Romance, all stanzas, particularly those that are remarkable as such, appear to us to be as unfit for the ease and freedom of narrative poetry as a horse which should have a trick of stopping at every twenty yards, whether you wanted him to get on or not. The couplet, we think, would be the best ; nor would it be any drawback on its merits if the reader were occasionally reminded of Dryden, for the best parts of Dryden's versification are some of the best music of which English rhythm is capable ; or, in other words, are imitated from the best part of the versification of Chaucer himself,—an assertion that may make some persons smile, who always think of the Father of English Poetry as a mere clown compared with his children, but which we may be able to prove to

their satisfaction in some future papers. The writer, however, who undertook to finish a story of Chaucer, should come to his task, not only with as much rhythmical vigour as Dryden, but with twenty times his nature and sentiment, and with at least a great portion of the abstract poetical luxury of Spenser, whose attempt, nevertheless, of this very task, is one of the least happy passages of his poem. A writer like our Correspondent, who is able to relish Chaucer, must demand that which delighted him *in Chaucer*,—that is to say, idiom and simplicity of style, and real, unsophisticated, straight-forward nature, in the manners, sentiment, and description ; but how difficult to get hold of these, when the style of our poetry has been little else, for these hundred and fifty years, but a kind of classical cant, and some of those, who have latterly undertaken to improve it, have substituted another sort of cant, a business of *yeas* and *haths* for simplicity ? A continuer of Chaucer must write as Chaucer wrote, in the best kind of his own every-day language ;—like Chaucer, he must dare to speak and think as nature tells him, and not as the French tell him, or his books :—but to do all this, he must be a true poet as well as his original. He must be born of the same breed, or how shall he take to the same atmosphere ? He must have a like grace and vigour of wing, or how shall he sport about at will,—how shall he descend, and gambol, and sparkle, and soar ?

Spenser himself, in continuing Chaucer's story, thinks it necessary to make an ardent apology for so doing, and thus addresses the shade of his great predecessor :—

“ Then pardon, O most sacred, happie spirit,
That I thy labours lost may thus revive,
And steale from thee the meede of thy due merit,
That none durst ever whilst thou wast alive,
And, being dead, in vaine yet many strive :
Ne dare I like ; but, through infusion sweete
Of thine owne spirit which doth in me survive,
I follow here the footing of thy feete,
That with thy meaning so I may the rather meete.”

Faerie Queene, Book IV. Canto 2.

The plain fact is that none but true poets can continue, as none but such can translate, each other ; and this is the reason why there have ever been, and are ever likely to be, so few good translations ; for a true poet will generally feel the ambition of originality as well as his fellows, and endeavour to make work for the translators himself.

But there are two reasons why we should scarcely wish to see Chaucer's story finished by the very best modern hand. The one is because it would take away a certain venerable grace and interest, which accompanies the very idea of a noble fragment, and which seems, in the same way, to have struck the Italian sculptor, who refused to supply the limb of an ancient statue ; the other, because modern versions, strictly so called, of an old poet, tend to divert attention

from the illustrious original, and to foster an additional ignorance of him, in consequence of what are supposed to be the rudeness of his style, and obscurities of his language. But we shall say more of these matters in two or three future numbers, which we propose to write on the subject of Chaucer's genius, and on the proper way of reading and enjoying him, accompanied with specimens, and a comment.

In the mean time, we cannot close the present article in a better manner than by giving a sample or two of the story which has called forth the analysis of our Correspondent. And here we shall anticipate an observation on what appears to us to be the best method of modernizing the Father of English poetry, if modernized he need be at all; and even then we would always have the original kept by the side. It should be, we think, after the mode of the Italian *rifacimento*, altering only just as much as is necessary for comfortable intelligibility, and preserving all the rest, that which appears quaint as well as that which is more modern,—in short, as much of the author,—his nature,—his own mode of speaking and describing, as possible. By thus preserving his best parts, we should keep the model of Nature, his own model, before us, and make modern things bend to her,—not her, as is the custom of our self-love, bend to every thing which happens to be modern.

The commencement of Chaucer's stories have

always to us a certain morning freshness in them, — in some measure, perhaps, from his fondness for adorning them with descriptions of that time of day, or of the spring. There is a sparkling passage of this sort in the story of Cambuscan, and those who know how to read the author with the proper attention to the vowels after the manner still used in France, will see in it the beauty of his versification as well as description :

“ Phœbus the sonne ful jolif was and clere,
 For he was nigh his exaltation
 In Marte’s face, and in his mansion
 In Aries, the colerike hot signe :
 Ful lusty was the wether and benigne :
 For which the foules again the sonne shene,
 What for the seson and the yonge grene,
 Ful loude songen hir affections :
 Hem seemed hem han gotten hem protections
 Again the swerd of winter kene and cold.”

Which, if it were to be re-written in the way mentioned above, would surely want little more than a change of the spelling :—

“ Phœbus the sun full jolly was and clear,
 For he was nigh his exaltation
 In Mars’s face, and in his mansion
 In Aries, the cholericke hot sign :—
 Full lusty was the weather and benign,
 For which the birds, against the sunny sheen,
 What for the season and the crisp young green,
 Full out in the fine air sang their affections :
 It seemed to them that they had got protections
 Against the sword of winter, keen and cold.”

The following is the description of the Knight’s entrance :—

“ And so befell, that after the thridde cours,
 While that this king sit thus in his nobley,
 Herking his minstralles her thinges play
 Beforne him at his bord deliciously,
 In at the halle dore al sodenly
 Ther came a knight upon a stede of brass,
 And in his hond a brod mirror of glas ;
 Upon his thombe he had of gold a ring,
 And by his side a naked sword hanging ;
 And up he rideth to the highe borde.
 In all the halle ne was ther spoke a word
 For mervaille of this knight ;—him to behold
 Ful besily they waiten, yong and old.”

This scarcely wants any thing for the most indolent modern reader, but a little change of the same kind :—

“ And so befell, that after the third course,
 While that this king sat thus in his nobley,
 Hearing his minstrels their productions play
 Before him at his board deliciously,
 In at the great hall door all suddenly
 There came a knight upon a steed of brass,
 And in his hand a broad mirror of glass ;
 Upon his thumb he had of gold a ring,
 And by his side a naked sword hanging ;
 And up he rideth to the royal board.
 In all the hall there was not spoke a word
 For marvel of this knight :—him to behold
 Full busily they wait, both young and old.”

What truth and simplicity in this picture !— Every thing tells precisely as it should do :— the King’s state is before you, but the most prominent image is the Knight, and the wonder he creates. You seem to feel the silence of the hall, and to hear the dotting of the horse’s brazen feet up the pavement.

After explaining his message as the reader has heard, he goes out and alights from his steed, which, shining as the “sun bright,”

“Stood in the court as still as any stone.”

The talking and guessing of the common people who crowd about it are then excellently detailed, and may be compared with the same sort of picture in Spenser, where he describes the people coming about the dragon slain by the Red-cross Knight. At night time, the Court find themselves “gaping,” and go to bed: but Canace cannot help dreaming about her ring, and gets up earlier than usual to go and make trial of it in the garden. She

—“slept her firste slepe, and than awoke :
For welle a joy she in hire herte toke
Both of hire quainte ring, and of hire mirroure,
That twenty time she chaunged her colour :
And in hire slepe, right for the impression
Of hire mirrour, she had a vision.”

We conclude with one of his usual morning touches. Canace, in leaving her bed, calls up her women and her old nurse, who does not exactly understand what her mistress can be stirring so early for; but they all seem ready enough to wait upon her, and up she gets,

“ As rody and bright as the yonge Sonne,
That in the Ram is foure degrees yronne ;
No higher was he, when she redy was ;
And forth she walketh esily a pace,
Arrayed after the lusty seson sote
Lightly for to playe, and walken on fote,

Nought but with five or sixe of hire meinie ;
And in a trenche forth in the park goth she.
The vapour, which that fro the erthe glode,
Maketh the Sonne to seme rody and brode."

This wants as little modernizing as the former ;
—up rises Canace,

" As ruddy and as bright as the young Sun
That in the Ram but four degrees has run ;
No higher was he, when she ready was ;
And forth she walketh easily a pace,
Dress'd, with the lovely time of year to suit,
Lightly to play and walk about on foot,
With only five or six in company ;
And in a trench forth in the park goes she.
The vapour, that up glided from the ground,
Made the sun seem ruddy, and broad, and round."

In this manner, perhaps, it might be warrantable to touch Chaucer's language, but still with himself by the side to see it done reverently, and to correct the passages which an inferior hand might leave faulty. It is possible that something of a vapour, at least to common eyes, might be thus removed from *his* glorious face ; but to venture any further, we are afraid, would be to attempt to improve the sun itself, or to go and re-colour the grass it looks upon.

L. H.

No. IX.

ON THE TENDENCY OF SECTS.

THERE is a natural tendency in sects to narrow the mind.

The extreme stress laid upon differences of minor importance, to the neglect of more general truths and broader views of things, gives an inverted bias to the understanding ; and this bias is continually increased by the eagerness of controversy, and captious hostility to the prevailing system. A party-feeling of this kind once formed will insensibly communicate itself to other topics ; and will be too apt to lead its votaries to a contempt for the opinions of others, a jealousy of every difference of sentiment, and a disposition to arrogate all sound principle as well as understanding to themselves and those who think with them. We can readily conceive how such persons, from fixing too high a value on the practical pledge which they have given of the independence and sincerity of their opinions, come at last to entertain a suspicion of every one else as acting under the shackles of prejudice or the mask of hypocrisy. All those who have not given in their unqualified protest against received doctrines and established authorities are supposed to labour under an acknowledged incapacity to form a rational determination any on subject whatever. Any argument, not having

the presumption of singularity in its favour, is immediately set aside as nugatory. There is, however, no prejudice so strong as that which arises from a fancied exemption from all prejudice. For this last implies not only the practical conviction that it is right, but the theoretical assumption that it cannot be wrong. From considering all objections as in this manner "null and void," the mind becomes so thoroughly satisfied with its own conclusions as to render any farther examination of them superfluous, and confounds its exclusive pretensions to reason with the absolute possession of it. Those who, from their professing to submit every thing to the test of reason, have acquired the name of Rational Dissenters, have their weak sides as well as other people; nor do we know of any class of disputants more disposed to take their opinions for granted than those who call themselves Free-thinkers. A long habit of objecting to every thing establishes a monopoly in the right of contradiction;—a prescriptive title to the privilege of starting doubts and difficulties in the common belief, without being liable to have our own called in question. There cannot be a more infallible way to prove that we must be in the right than by maintaining roundly that every one else is in the wrong!—Not only the opposition of sects to one another, but their unanimity among themselves, strengthens their confidence in their peculiar notions. They feel

themselves invulnerable behind the double fence of sympathy with themselves, and antipathy to the rest of the world. Backed by the zealous support of their followers, they become equally intolerant with respect to the opinions of others, and tenacious of their own. They fortify themselves within the narrow circle of their new-fangled prejudices ; the whole exercise of their right of private judgment is after a time reduced to the repetition of a set of watch-words, which have been adopted as the Shibboleth of the party ; and their extremest points of faith pass as current as the bead-roll and legends of the Catholics, or Saint Athanasius's Creed, and the Thirty-nine Articles. We certainly are not going to recommend the establishment of articles of faith, or implicit assent to them, as favourable to the progress of philosophy ; but neither has the spirit of opposition to them this tendency, as far as relates to its immediate effects, however useful it may be in its remote consequences. The spirit of controversy substitutes the irritation of personal feeling for the independent exertion of the understanding ; and when this irritation ceases, the mind flags for want of a sufficient stimulus to urge it on. It discharges all its energy with its spleen. Besides, this perpetual cavilling with the opinions of others, detecting petty flaws in their arguments, calling them to a literal account for their absurdities, and squaring their doctrines by a pragmatical standard of our own, is neces-

sarily adverse to any great enlargement of mind, or original freedom of thought.*—The constant attention bestowed on a few contested points, by at once flattering our pride, our prejudices, and our indolence, supersedes more general inquiries; and the bigoted controversialist, by dint of repeating a certain formula of belief, shall not only convince himself that all those who differ from him are undoubtedly wrong on that point, but that their knowledge on all others must be comparatively slight and superficial. We have known some very worthy and well informed biblical critics, who, by virtue of having discovered that one was not three, or that the same body could not be in two places at once, would be disposed to treat the whole Council of Trent, with Father Paul at their head, with very little deference, and to consider Leo X. with all his Court, as no better than drivellers. Such persons will hint to you, as an additional proof of his genius, that Milton was a non-conformist, and will excuse

* The Dissenters in this country (if we except the founders of sects, who fall under a class by themselves) have produced only two remarkable men, Priestley and Jonathan Edwards. The work of the latter on the Will is written with as much power of logic, and more in the true spirit of philosophy, than any other metaphysical work in the language. His object throughout is not to perplex the question, but to satisfy his own mind and the reader's. In general, the principle of dissent arises more from want of sympathy and imagination than from strength of reason. The spirit of contradiction is not the spirit of philosophy

the faults of *Paradise Lost*, as Dr. Johnson magnified them, because the author was a republican. By the all-sufficiency of their merits in believing certain truths which have been “hid for ages,” they are elevated, in their own imagination, to a higher sphere of intellect, and are released from the necessity of pursuing the more ordinary tracks of inquiry. Their faculties are imprisoned in a few favourite dogmas, and they cannot break through the trammels of a sect. Hence we may remark a hardness and setness in the ideas of those who have been brought up in this way, an aversion to those finer and more delicate operations of the intellect, of taste and genius, which require greater flexibility and variety of thought, and do not afford the same opportunity for dogmatical assertion and controversial cabal. The distaste of the Puritans, Quakers, &c., to pictures, music, poetry, and the fine arts in general, may be traced to this source as much as to their affected disdain of them as not sufficiently spiritual and remote from the gross impurity of sense.*

We learn from the interest we take in things, and according to the number of things in which

* The modern Quakers come as near the mark in these cases as they can. They do not go to plays, but they are great attenders of spouting-clubs and lectures. They do not frequent concerts, but run after pictures. We do not know exactly how they stand with respect to the circulating libraries. A Quaker poet would be a literary phenomenon.

we take an interest. Our ignorance of the real value of different objects and pursuits will in general keep pace with our contempt for them. To set out with denying common sense to every one else is not the way to be wise ourselves ; nor shall we be able to learn much, if we suppose that no one can teach us any thing worth knowing. Again, a contempt for the habits and manners of the world is as prejudicial as a contempt for their opinions. A puritanical abhorrence of every thing that does not fall in with our immediate prejudices and customs must effectually cut us off, not only from a knowledge of the world and of human nature, but of good and evil, of vice and virtue ; at least, if we can credit the assertion of Plato (which, to some degree, we do), that the knowledge of every thing implies the knowledge of its opposite. "There is some soul of goodness in things evil." A most respectable sect among ourselves (we mean the Quakers) have carried this system of negative qualities nearly to perfection. They labour diligently, and with great success, to exclude all ideas from their minds which they might have in common with others. On the principle that evil communication corrupts good manners, they retain a virgin purity of understanding, and laudable ignorance of all liberal arts and sciences ; they take every precaution, and keep up a perpetual quarantine against the infection of other people's vices—or virtues ; they pass through the world

like figures cut out of pasteboard or wood, turning neither to the right nor the left ; and their minds are no more affected by the example of the follies, the pursuits, the pleasures, or the passions of mankind, than the clothes which they wear. Their ideas want *airing* ; they are the worse for not being used : for fear of soiling them, they keep them folded up, and laid by, in a sort of mental clothes-press, through the whole of their lives. They take their notions on trust from one generation to another (like the scanty cut of their coats), and are so wrapped up in these traditional maxims, and so pin their faith on them, that one of the most intelligent of this class of people, not long ago, assured us that “ war was a thing that was going quite out of fashion ! ” This abstract sort of existence may have its advantages ; but it takes away all the ordinary sources of a moral imagination, as well as strength of intellect. Interest is the only link that connects them with the world. We can understand the high enthusiasm and religious devotion of monks and anchorites, who gave up the world and its pleasures to dedicate themselves to a sublime contemplation of a future state. But the sect of the Quakers, who have transplanted the maxims of the desert into manufacturing towns and populous cities, who have converted the solitary cells of the religious orders into counting - houses, their beads into ledgers and keep a regular debtor and creditor

account between this world and the next, puzzle us mightily!—The Dissenter is not vain, but conceited: that is, he makes up by his own good opinion for the want of the cordial admiration of others. But this often stands their self-love in so good stead that they need not envy their dignified opponents who repose on lawn sleeves and ermine. The unmerited obloquy and dislike to which they are exposed has made them cold and reserved in their intercourse with society. The same cause will account for the dryness and general homeliness of their style. They labour under a sense of the want of public sympathy. They pursue truth for its own sake, into its private recesses and obscure corners. They have to dig their way along a narrow under-ground passage. It is not their object to shine; they have none of the usual incentives of vanity, light, airy, and ostentatious. Archiepiscopal Sees and mitres do not glitter in their distant horizon. They are not wafted on the wings of fancy, fanned by the breath of popular applause. The voice of the world, the tide of opinion, is not with them. They do not therefore aim at *éclat*, at outward pomp and show.—They have a plain ground to work upon, and they do not attempt to embellish it with idle ornaments. It would be in vain to strew the flowers of poetry round the borders of the Unitarian controversy.

There is one quality common to all sectaries,

and that is, a principle of strong fidelity. They are the safest partisans, and the steadiest friends. Indeed, they are almost the only people who have any idea of an abstract attachment either to a cause or to individuals, from a sense of duty, independently of prosperous or adverse circumstances, and in spite of opposition.*

W. H.

No. X.

ON JOHN BUNCLE.

JOHN BUNCLE is the English *Rabelais*. This is an author with whom, perhaps, many of our readers are not acquainted, and whom we therefore wish to introduce to their notice. As most of our countrymen delight in English Generals and in English Admirals, in English Courtiers and in English Kings, so our great delight is in English authors.

The soul of Francis Rabelais passed into John Amory, the author of the *Life and Adventures of John Buncle*. Both were physicians, and enemies of too much gravity. Their great business was to enjoy life. Rabelais indulges his spirit of

* We have made the above observations, not as theological partisans, but as natural historians. We shall some time or other give the reverse of the picture; for there are vices inherent in establishments and their thorough-paced adherents, which well deserve to be distinctly pointed out.

sensuality in wine, in dried neats' tongues, in Bologna sausages, in botargos. John Buncle shows the same symptoms of inordinate satisfaction in tea and bread and butter. While Rabelais roared with Friar John and the Monks, John Buncle gossipped with the ladies; and with equal and uncontrolled gaiety. These two authors possessed all the insolence of health, so that their works gave a fillip to the constitution; but they carried off the exuberance of their natural spirits in different ways. The title of one of Rabelais' chapters (and the contents answer to the title) is—"How they chirped over their cups." The title of a corresponding chapter in John Buncle would run thus: "The author is invited to spend the evening with the divine Miss Hawkins, and goes accordingly—with the delightful conversation that ensued." Natural philosophers are said to extract sunbeams from ice: our author has performed the same feat upon the cold, quaint subtleties of theology.—His constitutional alacrity overcomes every obstacle. He converts the thorns and briars of controversial divinity into a bed of roses. He leads the most refined and virtuous of their sex through the mazes of inextricable problems, with the air of a man walking a minuet in a drawing-room; mixes up in the most natural and careless manner the academy of compliments with the rudiments of algebra; or passes with rapturous indifference from the 1st of St.

John and a disquisition on the Logos, to the no less metaphysical doctrines of the principle of self-preservation, or the continuation of the species. *John Buncle* is certainly one of the most singular productions in the language; and herein lies its peculiarity. It is a Unitarian romance; and one in which the soul and body are equally attended to. The hero is a great philosopher, mathematician, anatomist, chemist, philologist, and divine, with a good appetite, the best spirits, and an amorous constitution, who sets out on a series of strange adventures to propagate his philosophy, his divinity, and his species, and meets with a constant succession of accomplished females, adorned with equal beauty, wit, and virtue, who are always ready to discuss all kinds of theoretical and practical points with him. His angels (and all his women are angels) have all taken their degrees in more than one science:—love is natural to them. He is sure to find

“A mistress and a saint in every grove.”

Pleasure and business, wisdom and mirth, take their turns with the most agreeable regularity. *A jocis ad seria, in seriis vicissim ad jocos transire.* After a chapter of calculations in fluxions, or on the descent of tongues, the lady and gentleman fall from Platonics to hoydening, in a manner as truly edifying as any thing in the scenes of Vanbrugh or Sir George Etherege. No writer ever understood so well the art of relief. The effect

is like travelling in Scotland, and coming all of a sudden to a spot of habitable ground. His mode of making love is admirable. He takes it quite easily, and never thinks of a refusal. His success gives him confidence, and his confidence gives him success. For example: in the midst of one of his rambles in the mountains of Cumberland, he unexpectedly comes to an elegant country-seat, where, walking on the lawn with a book in her hand, he sees a most enchanting creature, the owner of the mansion: our hero is on fire, leaps the ha-ha which separates them, presents himself before the lady with an easy but respectful air, begs to know the subject of her meditation, they enter into conversation, mutual explanations take place, a declaration of love is made, and the wedding-day is fixed for the following Tuesday. Our author now leads a life of perfect happiness with his beautiful Miss Noel, in a charming solitude, for a few weeks; till, on his return from one of his rambles in the mountains, he finds her a corpse. He "*sits with his eyes shut for seven days*," absorbed in silent grief; he then bids adieu to melancholy reflections, not being one of that sect of philosophers who think that "*man was made to mourn*,"—takes horse and sets out for the nearest watering-place. As he alights at the first inn on the road, a lady dressed in a rich green riding-habit steps out of a coach, John Buncle hands her into the inn, they drink tea together, they converse,

they find an exact harmony of sentiment, a declaration of love follows as a matter of course, and that day week they are married. Death, however, contrives to keep up the ball for him ; he marries seven wives in succession, and buries them all.—In short, John Buncle's gravity sat upon him with the happiest indifference possible. He danced the hays with religion and morality, with the ease of a man of fashion and of pleasure. He was determined to see fair play between grace and nature, between his immortal and his mortal part, and in case of any difficulty, upon the principle of “ first come, first served,” made sure of the present hour. We sometimes suspect him of a little hypocrisy, but, upon a closer inspection, it appears to be only an affectation of hypocrisy. His fine constitution comes to his relief, and floats him over the shoals and quicksands that lie in his way, “ most dolphin-like.” You see him from mere happiness of nature chuckling with inward satisfaction in the midst of his periodical penances, his grave grimaces, his death's heads, and *memento moris*.

“ And there the antic sits
Mocking his state, and grinning at his pomp.”

As men make use of olives to give a relish to their wine, so John Buncle made use of philosophy to give a relish to life. He stops in a ball-room at Harrowgate to moralize on the small number of faces that appeared there out of those he remembered some years before : all were

gone whom he saw at a still more distant period ; but this casts no damp on his spirits, and he only dances the longer and better for it. He suffers nothing unpleasant to remain long upon his mind. He gives, in one place, a miserable description of two emaciated valetudinarians whom he met at an inn, supping a little mutton-broth with difficulty, but he immediately contrasts himself with them in fine relief. “ While I beheld things with astonishment, the servant,” he says, “ brought in dinner—a pound of rump steaks, and a quart of green peas ; two cuts of bread, a tankard of strong beer, and a pint of port wine ; *with a fine appetite, I soon dispatched my mess,—and over my wine, to help digestion, began to sing the following lines !*”—The astonishment of the two strangers was now as great as his own had been.

We wish to enable our readers to judge for themselves of the style of our whimsical moralist, but are at a loss what to choose—whether his account of his man O’Fin ; or of his friend Tom Fleming ; or of his being chased over the mountains by robbers, “ whisking before them like the wind away,” as if it were high sport ; or his address to the Sun, which is an admirable piece of serious eloquence ; or his character of six Irish gentlemen, Mr. Gollogher, Mr. Gallaspy, Mr. Dunkley, Mr. Makins, Mr. Monaghan, and Mr. O’Keefe, the last “ descended from the Irish kings, and first cousin to the

great O'Keefe, who was buried not long ago in Westminster Abbey." He professes to give an account of these Irish gentlemen, "for the honour of Ireland, and as they were curiosities of the human kind." Curiosities, indeed, but not so great as their historian!

"Mr. Makins was the only one of the set who was not tall and handsome. He was a very low, thin man, not four feet high, and had but one eye, with which he squinted most shockingly. But as he was matchless on the fiddle, sung well, and chatted agreeably, he was a favourite with the ladies. They preferred ugly Makins (as he was called) to many very handsome men. He was a Unitarian.

"Mr. Monaghan was an honest and charming fellow. This gentlemen and Mr. Dunkley married ladies they fell in love with at Harrowgate Wells; Dunkley had the fair Alcmena, Miss Cox of Northumberland; and Monaghan, Antiope with haughty charms, Miss Pearson of Cumberland. They lived very happy many years, and their children, I hear, are settled in Ireland."

Gentle reader, here is the character of Mr. Gallaspy:—

"Gallaspy was the tallest and strongest man I have ever seen, well made, and very handsome: had wit and abilities, sung well, and talked with great sweetness and fluency, but was so extremely wicked that it were better for him if he had been a natural fool. By his vast strength and

activity, his riches and eloquence, few things could withstand him. He was the most profane swearer I have known: fought every thing, whored every thing, and drank seven in hand: that is, seven glasses so placed between the fingers of his right hand that, in drinking, the liquor fell into the next glasses, and thereby he drank out of the first glass seven glasses at once. This was a common thing, I find from a book in my possession, in the reign of Charles II. in the madness that followed the restoration of that profligate and worthless prince.* But this gentleman was the only man I ever saw who could or would attempt to do it; and he made but one gulp of whatever he drank: he did not swallow a fluid like other people, but, if it was a quart, poured it in as from pitcher to pitcher. When he smoked tobacco, he always blew two pipes at once, one at each corner of his mouth, and threw the smoke out at both his nostrils. He had killed two men in duels before I left Ireland, and would have been hanged, but that it was his good fortune to be tried before a judge who never let any man suffer for killing another in this manner. (This was the late Sir John St. Leger.) He debauched all the women he could, and many whom he could not, corrupt" The rest of this passage would, we fear, be too

* Is all this a rhodomontade, or literal matter-of-fact, not credible in these degenerate days?

rich for the Round Table, as we cannot insert it, in the manner of Mr. Buncle, in a sandwich of theology. Suffice it to say that the candour is greater than the candour of Voltaire's *Candide*, and the modesty equal to Colley Cibber's.

To his friend Mr. Gollogher, he consecrates the following irresistible *petit souvenir* :

“ He might, if he had pleased, have married any one of the most illustrious and richest women in the kingdom ; but he had an aversion to matrimony, and could not bear the thoughts of a wife. Love and a bottle were his taste : he was, however, the most honourable of men in his amours, and never abandoned any woman in distress, as too many men of fortune do, when they have gratified desire. All the distressed were ever sharers in Mr. Gollogher's fine estate, and especially the girls he had taken to his breast. He provided happily for them all, and left nineteen daughters he had by several women, a thousand pounds each. This was acting with a temper worthy of a man ; and to the memory of the benevolent Tom Gollogher I devote this memorandum.”

. Lest our readers should form rather a coarse idea of our author from the foregoing passages, we will conclude with another list of friends in a different style.

“ The Conniv.ng-house (as the gentlemen of Trinity called it in my time, and long after) was a little public-house, kept by Jack Macklean

about a quarter of a mile beyond Rings-end, on the top of the beach, within a few yards of the sea. Here we used to have the finest fish at all times ; and in the season, green peas, and all the most excellent vegetables. The ale here was always extraordinary, and every thing the best ; which, with its delightful situation, rendered it a delightful place of a summer's evening. Many a delightful evening have I passed in this pretty thatched house with the famous Larry Grogan, who played on the bagpipes extremely well ; dear Jack Lattin, matchless on the fiddle, and the most agreeable of companions ; that ever charming young fellow, Jack Wall, the most worthy, the most ingenuous, the most engaging of men, the son of Counsellor Maurice Wall ; and many other delightful fellows, who went, in the days of their youth, to the shades of eternity. When I think of them and their evening songs—*We will go to Johnny Macklean's, to try if his ale be good or no, &c.*, and that years and infirmities begin to oppress me—What is life !”

We have another English author, very different from the last mentioned one; but equal in *naïveté*, and in the perfect display of personal character ; we mean Isaac Walton, who wrote the *Complete Angler*. That well-known work has an extreme simplicity, and an extreme interest, arising out of its very simplicity. In the description of fishing tackle you perceive the piety and hu-

manity of the author's mind. This is the best pastoral in the language, not excepting Pope's or Phillips's. We doubt whether San-nazarius's *Piscatory Eclogues* are equal to the scenes described by Walton on the banks of the River Lea. He gives the feeling of the open air. We walk with him along the dusty road-side, or repose on the banks of the river under a shady tree, and, in watching for the finny prey, imbibe what he beautifully calls "the patience and simplicity of poor, honest fisher-men." We accompany them to their inn at night, and partake of their simple, but delicious fare, while Maud, the pretty milk-maid, at her mother's desire, sings the classical ditties of Sir Walter Raleigh. Good cheer is not neglected in this work, any more than in *John Buncle*, or any other history which sets a proper value on the good things of life. The prints in the "*Complete Angler*" give an additional reality and interest to the scenes it describes. While Tottenham Cross shall stand, and longer, thy work, amiable and happy old man, shall last!*

W. H.

* One of the most interesting traits of the amiable simplicity of Walton is the circumstance of his friendship for Cotton, one of the "swash bucklers" of the age.—Dr. Johnson said there were only three works which the reader was sorry to come to the end of, *Don Quixote*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Perhaps Walton's *Angler* might be added to the number.

No. XI.

ON THE CAUSES OF METHODISM.

THE first Methodist on record was David. He was the first eminent person we read of who made a regular compromise between religion and morality, between faith and good works. After any trifling peccadillo in point of conduct, as a murder, adultery, perjury, or the like, he ascended with his harp into some high tower of his palace ; and having chaunted, in a solemn strain of poetical inspiration, the praises of piety and virtue, made his peace with heaven and his own conscience. This extraordinary genius, in the midst of his personal errors, retained the same lofty abstract enthusiasm for the favourite objects of his contemplation ; the character of the poet and the prophet remained unimpaired by the vices of the man —

“ Pure in the last recesses of the mind ;”

and the best test of the soundness of his principles, and the elevation of his sentiments, is that they were proof against his practice. The Gnostics afterwards maintained that it was no matter what a man’s actions were, so that his understanding was not debauched by them — so that his opinions continued uncontaminated, and *his heart*, as the phrase is, *right towards God*. Strictly speaking, this sect (whatever name it might go by) is as old as human nature itself ;

for it has existed ever since there was a contradiction between the passions and the understanding — between what we are, and what we desire to be. The principle of Methodism is nearly allied to hypocrisy, and almost unavoidably slides into it: yet it is not the same thing; for we can hardly call any one a hypocrite, however much at variance his professions and his actions, who really wishes to be what he would be thought.

The Jewish bard, whom we have placed at the head of this class of devotees, was of a sanguine and robust temperament. Whether he chose “to sinner it or saint it,” he did both most royally, with a fulness of gusto, and carried off his penances and his *faux-pas* in a style of oriental grandeur. This is by no means the character of his followers among ourselves, who are a most pitiful set. They may rather be considered as a collection of religious invalids; as the refuse of all that is weak and unsound in body and mind. To speak of them as they deserve, they are not well in the flesh, and therefore they take refuge in the spirit; they are not comfortable here, and they seek for the life to come; they are deficient in steadiness of moral principle, and they trust to grace to make up the deficiency; they are dull and gross in apprehension, and therefore they are glad to substitute faith for reason, and to plunge in the dark, under the supposed sanction of superior wisdom, into every species of

mystery and jargon. This is the history of Methodism, which may be defined to be religion with its slabbering-bib and go-cart. It is a bastard kind of Popery, stripped of its painted pomp and outward ornaments, and reduced to a state of pauperism. “The whole need not a physician.” Popery owed its success to its constant appeal to the senses and to the weaknesses of mankind. The Church of England deprives the Methodists of the pride and pomp of the Romish Church: but it has left open to them the appeal to the indolence, the ignorance, and the vices of the people; and the secret of the success of the Catholic faith and evangelical preaching is the same — both are a religion by proxy. What the one did by auricular confession, absolution, penance, pictures, and crucifixes, the other does, even more compendiously, by grace, election, faith without works, and words without meaning.

In the first place, the same reason makes a man a religious enthusiast that makes a man an enthusiast in any other way, an uncomfortable mind in an uncomfortable body. Poets, authors, and artists in general, have been ridiculed for a pining, puritanical, poverty-struck appearance, which has been attributed to their real poverty. But it would perhaps be nearer the truth to say that their being poets, artists, &c., has been owing to their original poverty of spirit and weakness of constitution. As a general rule, those who

are dissatisfied with themselves will seek to go out of themselves into an ideal world. Persons in strong health and spirits, who take plenty of air and exercise, who are "in favour with their stars," and have a thorough relish of the good things of this life, seldom devote themselves in despair to religion or the Muses. Sedentary, nervous, hypochondriacal people, on the contrary, are forced, for want of an appetite for the real and substantial, to look out for a more airy food and speculative comforts. "Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works." A journeyman sign-painter, whose lungs have imbibed too great a quantity of the effluvia of white lead, will be seized with a fantastic passion for the stage; and *Mawworm*, tired of standing behind his counter, was eager to mount a tub, mistaking the suppression of his animal spirits for the communication of the Holy Ghost!* If you live near a chapel or tabernacle in London, you may almost always tell, from physiognomical signs, which of the passengers will turn the corner to go there. We were once staying in a remote place in the country, where a chapel of this sort had been erected by the force of missionary zeal;

* Oxberry's manner of acting this character is a very edifying comment on the text: he flings his arms about, like those of a figure pulled by strings, and seems actuated by a pure spirit of infatuation, as if one blast of folly had taken possession of his whole frame,

"And filled up all the mighty void of sense."

and one morning we perceived a long procession of people coming from the next town to the consecration of this same chapel. Never was there such a set of scarecrows. Melancholy tailors, consumptive hair-dressers, squinting cobblers, women with child or in the ague, made up the forlorn hope of the pious cavalcade. The pastor of this half-starved flock, we confess, came riding after, with a more goodly aspect, as if he had “with sound of bell been knolled to church, and sat at good men’s feasts.” He had in truth lately married a thriving widow, and been pampered with hot suppers, to strengthen the flesh and the spirit. We have seen several of these “round fat oily men of God,

“ That shone all glittering with ungodly dew ;” they grow sleek and corpulent by getting into better pasture, but they do not appear healthy. They retain the original sin of their constitution, an atrabilious taint in their complexion, and do not put a right-down, hearty, honest, good-looking face upon the matter, like the regular clergy.

Again, Methodism, by its leading doctrines, has a peculiar charm for all those who have an equal facility in sinning and repenting,—in whom the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak,—who have neither fortitude to withstand temptation, nor to silence the admonitions of conscience,—who like the theory of religion better than the practice,—and who are willing to indulge in all the raptures of speculative devotion, without

being tied down to the dull, literal performance of its duties. There is a general propensity in the human mind (even in the most vicious) to pay virtue a distant homage ; and this desire is only checked by the fear of condemning ourselves by our own acknowledgements. What an admirable expedient then in “ that burning and shining light,” Whitfield, and his associates, to make this very disposition to admire and extol the highest patterns of goodness, a substitute for, instead of an obligation to, the practice of virtue, to allow us to be quit for “ the vice that most easily besets us,” by canting lamentations over the depravity of human nature, and loud hosannahs to the Son of David ! How comfortably this doctrine must sit on all those who are loth to give up old habits of vice, or are just tasting the sweets of new ones ; on the withered hag who looks back on a life of dissipation, or the young devotee who looks forward to a life of pleasure : the knavish tradesman retiring from business, or entering on it ; the battered rake ; the sneaking politician, who trims between his place and his conscience, wriggling between heaven and earth, a miserable two-legged creature, with sanctified face and fawning gestures ; the maudlin sentimentalist, the religious prostitute, the dis-interested poet-laureat, the humane war-contractor, or the Society for the Suppression of Vice ! This scheme happily turns morality into a sinecure, takes all the practical

drudgery and trouble off your hands, “ and sweet religion makes a rhapsody of words.” Its proselytes besiege the gates of heaven, like sturdy beggars about the doors of the great, lie and bask in the sunshine of divine grace, sigh and groan and bawl out for mercy, expose their sores and blotches to excite commiseration, and cover the deformities of their nature with a garb of borrowed righteousness !

The jargon and nonsense which are so studiously inculcated in the system are another powerful recommendation of it to the vulgar. It does not impose any tax upon the understanding. Its essence is to be unintelligible. It is a *carte blanche* for ignorance and folly ! Those “ numbers without number,” who are either unable or unwilling to think connectedly or rationally on any subject, are at once released from every obligation of the kind, by being told that faith and reason are opposed to one another, and the greater the impossibility, the greater the merit of the faith. A set of phrases which, without conveying any distinct idea, excite our wonder, our fear, our curiosity and desires, which let loose the imagination of the gaping multitude, and confound and baffle common-sense, are the common stock-in-trade of the conventicle. They never stop for the distinctions of the understanding, and have thus got the start of other sects, who are so hemmed in with the necessity of giving reasons for their opinions that they

cannot get on at all. “Vital Christianity” is no other than an attempt to lower all religion to the level of the lowest of the capacities of the people. One of their favourite places of worship combines the noise and turbulence of a drunken brawl at an ale-house with the indecencies of a bagnio. They strive to gain a vertigo by abandoning their reason, and give themselves up to the intoxications of a distempered zeal, that

“ Dissolves them into ecstasies,
And brings all heaven before their eyes.”

Religion, without superstition, will not answer the purposes of fanaticism, and we may safely say that almost every sect of Christianity is a perversion of its essence, to accommodate it to the prejudices of the world. The Methodists have greased the boots of the Presbyterians—and they have done well. While the latter are weighing their doubts and scruples to the division of a hair, and shivering on the narrow brink that divides philosophy from religion, the former plunge without remorse into hell-flames,—soar on the wings of divine love,—are carried away with the motions of the spirit,—are lost in the abyss of unfathomable mysteries, election, reprobation, predestination,—and revel in a sea of boundless nonsense. It is a gulf that swallows up every thing. The cold, the calculating, and the dry, are not to the taste of the many; religion is an anticipation of the preternatural

world, and it in general requires preternatural excitements to keep it alive. If it takes a definite consistent form, it loses its interest: to produce its effect, it must come in the shape of an apparition. Our quacks treat grown people as the nurses do children;—terrify them with what they have no idea of, or take them to a puppet-show.

W. H.

No. XII.

ON THE POETICAL CHARACTER.

A STRONG sensation, as the phrase is, has been excited among our readers, by the article on Methodism of our friend W. H.; and we feel ourselves inclined to say something to it, not indeed in contradiction, for we heartily agree with almost every particle of it, nor in emulation, for we know where our powers lie; but in addition to what he has thrown out on one or two incidental points. The reader must merely consider us as pursuing the subject at the ROUND TABLE, after a sufficient pause of admiration at our friend's chivalrous eloquence, broken only by the cracking of walnuts, and a grateful replenishing of his glass.

As to the Methodists, however, we do not pretend to argue with them. We only wonder how

they can argue with others, seeing that they set out with renouncing reason itself. We do not object, neither, we are sure, does W. H., to David's proceedings being looked upon with an eye of charity, any more than we do to Charles the Second's or to Louis the Fourteenth's, whatever may be our objection to those who make certain differences where there are none. Methodism, in one respect, comes to the same end as Philosophy, in divesting merit of its self-love, and demerit of its hopelessness ; but then it cuts up a great deal of good taste and virtue by the way ; and, after denying merit in practice, makes a still more ridiculous one consist in opinion. There is no arguing with people of these perceptions. A real Methodist (for all are not Methodists who call themselves so, any more than all persons think, who think that they do) has more need of a physician than a logician ; he should take the road to the doctor's instead of to the chapel ; and before any one, who is falling into the same way, and has not yet been persuaded out of the reason that Providence gave him to see with, undertakes to look after the state of his soul, which he is to enjoy in the next world, let him be able to say that he has properly attended to the state of his body, which was given him to enjoy in the present. If he has, he will very soon convince himself that he has saved both together ; if not, the best road for him is a good horse-road. It is an excellent

piece of advice, “read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest ;” but all the “inwardly digesting” in the world of one sort will not do without the other. Before the patient has ridden or walked two hours for a hundred days successively, we will be bound that he not only finds himself in infinitely better spirits, but every thing with a better aspect about him, and others, as well as the Methodists, in a much better way than he imagined. He will not *flatter* himself that he is comfortable, by reckoning himself as one of the preposterously small minority to be saved ; but *feel* that he is so, by seeing that the infinite majority are upon the whole happier than otherwise, and quite as acceptable to a good Being as he. He will discover that actions are as much better than opinions as exercise is than the want of it. He will no longer prefer the “light,” as it is called, to the common daylight of health and reason ; nor blind himself in order to see better, like an infant who shuts his eyes to look through a pair of spectacles. The Methodists talk of the “vile world” and the “vile body,” and boast of being able to view the next world better, in proportion as they see every thing discoloured in this ; but they carry the same discolourment every where in spite of themselves ; their optics resemble the burnt glasses, which enable us to look at the sun, but convert it into a blood-red fire. This is jaundice, and not religion. We do not honour the Maker by dis-

praising what he has made. The “vile world” and the “vile body” are very valuable and beautiful things to people in health ; and health only, or what you remember of it, is the fit judge of the beautiful, because its perceptions only are in their natural state ; its mouth, as the doctors say, is not out of taste. So, to finish this long digression into which we have run unawares in behalf of the Methodists indirect, we once more disclaim all intention of arguing with the Methodists direct, unless they take up the question physically. It is with their livers they must discuss the matter, and not with their lungs ; and, indeed, it is a mere pretence in them to affect that they ever talk otherwise. They are a kind of diseased ventriloquists, and speak from the diaphragm. Whenever we see the title of a methodistical pamphlet, we always make an erratum as we go along, and read it, “ How to discern things with the help of the jaundice,—By an Eye-Witness,”—or “ Hints towards keeping a bad state of health when you get it,—By a Sufferer.”

It was concerning the poets and others of their cast, whether in art or even philosophy, whether Raphael or Plato, that we intended to take up the conversation,—a race of men among whom very few Methodists have been found ; and for this reason, in addition to their natural powers of thinking,—that in their youth and health they have had too strong a sense of the beauties of

things about them, for almost any adversity to tear away. They retain a certain healthiness of mind, as other people do of body, by a constant activity with nature,—a perpetual mental living, as it were, out of doors. Or rather they have more natural resources than other persons; they are richer when they begin the world. It is on this point, if any, that we differ from our friend W. H. He attributes *original* poverty of spirit to poets, artists, &c., and we would substitute the word *occasional* or *incidental*. Poetry, in fact, with a reserve always as to first causes, or to the question why such a man is a poet and others are not, seems to be the result of an organization delicate, but not diseased, whatever disease may be induced afterwards. A young poet has perhaps the most pleasurable tendencies of any human being, and the greatest number of them;—at home or abroad, in the city or the country, in society or alone, he has an instinct to fasten on and fetch out the whole wealth of enjoyment; and as long as he is in health, this habit is of necessity the result of a love of pleasure, instead of a sense of pain, or of the want of resources. The smallest and most insignificant thing can administer to his pleasure by means of association; and it is from the same cause that he is enabled to render tenfold his sense of the beautiful, in what people admire in general,—that he has the brightest sense of the sunshine, and is the warmest lover of woman,—that he sees the

splendour of an Arabian tale along the wealthy shops of a capital,—peoples every green field with all its pleasures at once,—and accompanies the movements of a beautiful figure with a host of graces and delights. It was in this feeling that Akenside, himself a young poet at the time, invoked his animal as well as intellectual spirits in the *Pleasures of Imagination* :—

“ Be present, all ye Genii, who conduct
 The wandering footsteps of the youthful bard
 New to your springs and shades,—who touch his ear
 With finer sounds,—who heighten to his eye
 The bloom of nature, and before him turn
 The gayest, happiest attitude of things.”

On the other hand, it is evident that this exquisite tendency to pleasure is liable, from the delicacy of its nature, to degenerate into as exquisite a tendency to pain; and poets may exhibit the poverty in question more than other men, not because they have been always poor, but because, like other spendthrifts of great wealth, the change from riches to poverty is the greater.

Let a poet do his utmost to keep his health,—to hinder his nerves from being overwrought, and to preserve his blood in its proper flow, and we will answer for it that his life runs sprightly to the last. But what are his temptations? To say nothing, for instance, of other sensualities, he has as strong a relish of repose as of action; the nature of modern education, and of modern

customs in general, tends to throw him into sedentary enjoyment; and the single fact of his giving way to this propensity,—of his hanging over books, and cultivating his mental activity at the expense of his bodily,—may weaken his organs of digestion, and alter his sensations at once from pleasure to pain. This is a very unromantic circumstance, but it is a very true one. It is all very well to talk of grief and misfortunes; we are not unexperienced in either; nor do we mean to say that we do not sympathize with those whom they afflict, let the cause be what it may. If self-caused, so much indeed the more to be pitied. But grief, though certainly not always to be done away by endeavouring to strengthen the body, may generally be more modified by it than is imagined. The mind is a very delicate thing, but the body is given us to keep it in. We must not wonder that we get weather-beaten, if we do not take care of our wainscots. In a "sea of troubles," a great deal surely depends on the boat.

Such, however, after all, is the natural tendency of poets to pleasure, that they retain more of it, we are persuaded, in the midst of pain, than any persons of the same delicate organization, who are not poets. In fact, their very ability to resort to fancy for the supply of enjoyment is a proof of it. Epicurus said that it was a relief to him, in the severest torments of the stone, to call to mind the pleasures he had enjoyed; and

such is the philosophical power of poetry, with the additional excitement of its being able to embody its recollections in verse, and to procure fame by them. We are aware but of six poets on record whose nerves appear to have embittered their existence,—Tasso, Salvator Rosa, Racine, Cowper, Collins, and Alfieri. The two latter had been rakes ; the nerves of the fourth seem, from his very infancy, to have hung together by threads ; and the third apparently resembled him, for he absolutely died of nervousness at losing the countenance of Louis the Fourteenth. The cause of Tasso's hypochondria is involved in mystery ; and we believe, after all, that he got rid of it, as temperate people are apt to do, towards the latter part of their lives. If Parnell is to increase the list, it should be added that his final bad spirits have been attributed to the loss of his wife, and that, to try and better them, he resorted to the bottle. We speak, of course, with reverence of the frailties of such beings, as well as of their other infirmities.—Tasso was perhaps a little proud and assuming ; but Parnell, Cowper, and Racine, were all most amiable men ; and so must Collins have been, if we are to judge from the fondness exhibited for him by Dr. Johnson. The most complete specimen of destitution of spirits, from first to last, and the only one we ever remember to have read of, is afforded by that accomplished genius, Salvator Rosa, who united, and with a certain

degree of excellence too, poetry, painting, and music. He said of himself, if we rightly remember a passage we met with somewhere, that nature seemed to have formed him purely to make an experiment how far human suffering could go. But certainly he wanted boldness in no respect.

Should Chatterton's name be mentioned, who promised to be a great poet, it is to be remembered that no youth ever set out in the world with higher spirits, as may be seen from his letters to his mother and sister; but he too was a spendthrift of them; and the contrast of pain seems to have overset him by its suddenness as well as violence. The late excellent Henry Kirke White, who promised to be a poet also, was a martyr to study:

“ The spoiler swept that soaring lyre away,
Which else had sounded an immortal lay.
Oh what a noble heart was here undone,
When Science' self destroy'd her favourite son !”

BYRON.

So says of him a noble poet, who is fulfilling the promise of *his* youth, and who has known enough of the pleasures and pains of his nature, to think, we dare say, with us.

But the poets above mentioned are nothing in point of number to the poets in general,—taking, of course, only the true ones, among which Parnell himself perhaps is scarcely to be admitted. Of the great mass, there is no reason to believe

but that if they had more pain, they had also more pleasure, than the rest of their fellow-creatures ; and that pleasure, on the whole, was predominant. It has been supposed by some that by "poverty of spirit," our friend W. H. meant want of spirit, in the common sense of the term, as referring to courage ; but he means, of course, what we have already said, and not a deficiency which would be incompatible with enthusiasm, as well as especially contradicted by the poets of his own country, whom nobody understands or enjoys more. There may be a deficiency of animal courage, where there is the very greatest courage arising from reflection ; and the latter, no doubt, belongs more to a delicate organization than the former.

But to proceed with a glance at the principal poets. Little or nothing is known of the personal habits of the Grecian poets ; but Homer has been handed down by tradition, probably from his delight in expatiating on good cheer (which, however, would tell as much the other way), as having been what is now called a jolly fellow ;—Anacreon, in spite of his drinking, is understood to have been merry to the last ;—the Greek wine was probably not very potent, nor drunk by him immoderately, or he must have taken as much exercise as a fox-hunter, for he lived to an old age. The Greek tragedians, generally speaking, were men who led active lives in the world, and in professions

which could not have put up with poverty of spirit.

The two poets who have done more harm, perhaps, to the reputation of their professions for spirit than all their brethren put together, are Virgil and Horace, both of them flatterers of Augustus, and the one an absolute runaway ; but if the former is said to have been of a nervous temperament, the latter, whatever may have been his asthma, or his occasional fits of indigestion, was surely gifted with a very agreeable run of sensations,—so agreeable that who has not pardoned him (the rogue !) for all his transgressions ? He is the very *Gil Blas* of poets, with talents and sentiment to boot.

To come to modern Italy, we have already spoken of Tasso and Alfieri, and hardly know what to say on the score of the great Dante, who appears to have been a grave personage from his youth, though there is a delightful sonnet of his extant, in which he talks of going on a boat-party with some friends, in a style that is very amiable and companionable. But Petrarch's youth, as he himself tells us, was full of life and spirits ; and, so far from not having a relish for ordinary things, he was one of the greatest bucks at Avignon, and rallies himself and a friend of his on the exceeding care they used to take not to rumple their cloaks or splash their stockings. Ariosto, Pulci, Berni, * Bembo,

* By the way, Berni's entertaining description of him-

Casa, Fortiguerrri, Marino, all appear to have set out in similar health and spirits, and not to have lost them, generally speaking, afterwards, though most of them exhibited symptoms of delicate organization, and, there is great reason to believe, had led very free lives. Guidi's temper is said to have been so diseased that, as he was taking a copy of a new poem of his to court, in order to present it to the Pope, he died in the coach, of a fit of passion, on discovering some errors of the press. Filicaia, by his poems, appears to have been an habitual invalid and devotee ; Redi describes himself as of a dry and chilly complexion ; and Frugoni has written several little poems on his hypochondria, intermixed with warm praises of his physicians for defeating its attacks, which they appear never to have failed to do. A friend, who pronounced his panegyric, represents him as dying old and robust. Sannazarius died at an advanced age also, though his life had been far from fortunate ; and so did Metastasio, a hypochondriac professed, who talks very pleasantly to his friend Farinelli about head-ache, tension of the nerves, and "other gentilities ;" and says, he finds it, after all, "a cursed business, this same trade of

self and his friend, in the last canto of the *Orlando Innamorato*, seems to have been the origin, both of the general idea of Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*, and of the personal introductions of one's self in poetry, as exemplified in that delightful little work.

heroism." Tansillo's *Tears of St. Peter*, written in his advanced years, was a mere piece of methodistical compromise, after the manner of David, for his previous rakery and his licentious poem of the *Vintager*.

Among the French poets, we have already mentioned Racine. We do not remember any thing of the private life of Corneille. Molière, we believe, was a nervous man, and so was Boileau; La Fontaine, when he died, was found to have a hair shirt next his skin,—a piece of penance for his *Tales*; but the greater part of his life appears to have passed in a kind of contented infantine dream, half unconscious of the wit and fine things it uttered; and Chaulieu, La Fare, and above all Voltaire, what perfection of the animal as well as intellectual vivacity of their countrymen! Voltaire's cheerfulness is the last talent, perhaps, which his adversaries will forgive him.

To come home to England. It is not one of the least curious instances of the native spirit of this country, that three out of its four greatest poets,—Chaucer, Spenser, and Milton,—have been men of busy action in the political world,—that two out of the three were unequivocally on the side of freedom, and helped to procure us our present enjoyments,—and that the greater part of the rest, Gray, Collins, Pope, Thomson, Akenside, Andrew Marvell, &c. had a like feeling for independence. It is the same with the majo-

rity of the poets now living. There is no reason to believe that these celebrated men were not upon the whole very comfortable with themselves, and enjoyed what they have made so many others enjoy. Pope had evidently a quick relish of existence, in spite of his bodily infirmities. Gray and Collins were not so lively, but then it was after the season of youth. Thomson was of a cheerful temperament, so was Garth, so was Prior, Fenton, Congreve, so were Beaumont and Fletcher, so was Andrew Marvell, and so was Chaucer, till he got into prison in his old age. There is no doubt that Milton's infirmities arose from over-application, as well as political trouble; yet, in the midst of his blindness and all the rest, "with darkness and with dangers compassed round," he expressly tells us that he had not abated "a jot of heart or hope." That fine fellow, Sir Philip Sydney (whose biographers, by the way, have not told half, we suspect, of what might be discovered by an inquiring and unprejudiced writer), is said to have been of a temperament inclined to melancholy, but not in his first youth; it was after all but a gentle one,—a twilight, in which he saw things softly, if not brilliantly.—Cowley's was of the same description,—a tendency to "the pensive pleasures." As to Shakspeare, who baffles one's speculations of every sort, it seems impossible, on the one hand, that he could have had such a complete feeling of the pros-

tration of spirits,—of the wearisome sameness of a sickly eyesight,—as he has manifested in *Hamlet* and other characters, if he had not felt it in his own person ; but then, on the other, what must have been his merriment and his volatility, if we are to judge from *Falstaff*, *Benedick*, and others of the laughing order ? He must have been Democritus and Heraclitus in one person,—an anomaly not unaccountable on the very ground of melancholy itself ; but this, after all, is a secondary question. His original spirits, according to the account given us of his early life, appear to have been sprightly and sanguine, to a degree of defiance.

The same remarks will apply to the painters and musicians. They do not appear to have been originally deficient in any sort of spirit, whatever want some of them may have induced upon themselves. Mozart is said to have suffered under an exhausted sensibility in the latter part of his life ; but we believe he had a strong sense of other pleasures besides those of his art ; and music, in its direct vibrations upon the nerves, always seemed likely to us, as far as we could guess, to be a more trying thing to a composer who enjoyed it, and who was not of a very stout organization, than poetry itself. It is absolute dram-drinking at the ear. Yet Haydn, from the little we have heard of him, appears to have been a very staid personage ; and Handel, with all his sublimities, and even his delicacies and tricksome

graces, was a gross kind of jovial fellow, and announced by a plethoric person (to use the Gibbonian style) the ample use he made of his knife and fork.

A certain amorousness, and perception of beauty, appear to be the distinguishing features of Mozart's composition ; and in this respect, as well as in others, perhaps, he had some resemblance to Raphael, who seemed born for no other purpose but to feel what was amiable and beautiful, and to touch out anew, as it were, the sweetest note of our sphere. His very awfulness is lovely, like that of the cherub in Milton. Raphael received from nature such a sense of the pleasurable that, if the general belief is well founded with respect to the occasion of his death, he fell a martyr to it in the 37th year of his age. Michael Angelo was of an austere cast ; but we do not know that his temper was melancholy. Rubens was a very high-toned spirit, and had a sort of princeliness and splendour in his style of living, that resembled the taste of his pictures.

The summary then of what we have been saying is this,—that poets, in our opinion, and those that partake of this character, have originally a wealth instead of poverty of spirit ; — that they are very liable, however, from the temptations into which it leads them, to fall into such poverty ; — but that, even then, they are more likely than most persons to retain a portion of their

first resources, and feel some of that pleasure which they were made to communicate to the world. We say, moreover, that health is the great secret of wealth in this instance ; and that a poet or painter, as well as any body else, who falls into lowness of spirit, should do his best to help himself out of it,—on horseback if he wants a lift more than ordinary,—with his feet, if he does not,—but with some mode of bodily effort at any rate. And now, having ended our long fit of talking, we feel in us an exceeding tendency to the pleasure of a glass of wine (a reasonable one of course), and shall drink it, with this toast, to all our brother authors, present and to come,—

May good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both.

L. H.



No. XIII.

ON DEATH AND BURIAL.

THE Christian mythology personifies Death by an animated skeleton ;—the Pagan did it by the figure of a pale but beautiful female, or, with a reconciliation still more agreeable, by that of a butterfly escaped from its chrysalis. This was death, and the life that followed it, at once,—the soul freed from the body, and fluttering in the fresh air of heaven.

The cultivation of pleasant associations is, next to health, the great secret of enjoyment ; and, accordingly, as we lessen our cares and increase our pleasures, we may imagine ourselves affording a grateful spectacle to the Author of happiness. Error and misery, taken in their proportion, are the exceptions in his system. The world is most unquestionably happier upon the whole than otherwise ; or light, and air, and the face of nature, would be different from what they are, and mankind no longer be buoyed up in perpetual hope and action. By cultivating agreeable thoughts, then, we tend, like bodies in philosophy, to the greater mass of sensations, rather than the less.

What we can enjoy, let us enjoy like creatures made for that very purpose : what we cannot, let us, in the same character, do our best to deprive of its bitterness. Nothing can be more idle than the voluntary gloom with which people think to please Heaven in certain matters, and which they confound with serious acknowledgement, or with what they call a due sense of its dispensations. It is nothing but the cultivation of the principle of fear, instead of confidence, with whatever name they disguise it. It is carrying frightened faces to court, instead of glad and grateful ones ; and is above all measure ridiculous, because the real cause of it, and, by the way, of a thousand other feelings which religious courtiers mistake for religion, cannot

be concealed from the Being it is intended to honour. There is a dignity, certainly, in suffering where we cannot choose but suffer ;—if we must take physic, let us do it like men ;—but what would be his dignity who, when he had the choice in his power, should make the physic bitterer than it is, or even refuse to render it more palatable, purely to look grave over it, and do honour to the physician ?

The idea of our dissolution is one of those which we most abuse in this manner, principally, no doubt, because it is abhorrent from the strong principle of vitality implanted in us, and the habits that have grown up with it. But what then ? So much the more should we divest it of all the unpleasant associations which it need not excite, and add to it all the pleasant ones which it will allow.

But what is the course we pursue ? We remember having a strong impression, years ago, of the absurdity of our mode of treating a death-bed, and of the great desirableness of having it considered as nothing but a sick one,—one to be smoothed and comforted, even by cordial helps, if necessary. We remember also how some persons, who, nevertheless, did too much justice to the very freest of our speculations to consider them as profane, were startled by this opinion, till we found it expressed in almost so many words, by no less an authority than Lord Bacon. We got at our notion through a very different

process, we dare say,—he through the depth of his knowledge, and we from the very buoyancy of our youth ;—but we are not disposed to think it the less wise on that account. “ The serious,” of course, are bound to be shocked at so cheering a proposition ; but of them we have already spoken. The great objection would be that such a system would deprive the evil-disposed of one terror in prospect, and that this principle of determent is already found too feeble to afford any diminution. The fact is, the whole principle is worth little or nothing, except the penalty to be inflicted is pretty certain, and appeals also to the less sentimental part of our nature. It is good habits,—a well-educated conscience,—a little early knowledge,—the cultivation of generous motives,—must supply people with preventives of bad conduct ; their sense of things is too immediate and lively to attend, in the long run, to any thing else. We will be bound to say, generally speaking, that the prospective terrors of a death-bed never influenced any others than nervous consciences, too weak, and inhabiting organizations too delicate, to afford to be very bad ones. But, in the mean time, they may be very alarming to such consciences in prospect, and very painful to the best and most temperate of mankind in actual sufferance ; and why should this be, but, as we have said before, to keep bitter that which we could sweeten, and to persist in a mistaken want of

belief, under a notion of its being a due sense of our condition ? We know well enough what a due sense of our condition is in other cases of infirmity ; and what is a death-bed but the very acme of infirmity,—the sickness, bodily and mental, that of all others has most need of relief ?

If the death-bed happens to be an easy one, the case is altered ; and no doubt it is oftener so than people imagine ;—but how much pains are often taken to render it difficult ?—First, the chamber, in which the dying person lies, is made as gloomy as possible with curtains, and vials, and nurses, and terrible whispers, and perhaps the continual application of handkerchiefs to weeping eyes ;—then, whether he wishes it or not, or is fit to receive it not, he is to have the whole truth told him by some busy-body, who never was so anxious perhaps in the cause of veracity before ;—and lastly, some partings, and family assemblings, and confusion of the head with matters of faith, and trembling prayers that tend to force upon dying weakness the very doubts they undertake to dissipate. Well may the soldier take advantage of such death-beds as these, to boast of the end that awaits him in the field !

But having lost our friend, we must still continue to add to our own misery at the circumstance. We must heap about the recollection of our loss all the most gloomy and distasteful circumstances we can contrive, and thus, perhaps,

absolutely incline ourselves to think as little of him as possible. We wrap the body in ghastly habiliments, put it in as tasteless a piece of furniture as we can invent, dress ourselves in the gloomiest of colours, awake the barbarous monotony of the church-bell (to frighten every sick person in the neighbourhood), call about us a set of officious mechanics, of all sorts, who are counting their shillings, as it were, by the tears that we shed, and watching with jealousy every candle's end of their "perquisites,"—and proceed to consign our friend or relation to the dust, under a ceremony that takes particular pains to impress that consummation on our minds.—Lastly, come tasteless tombstones and ridiculous epitaphs, with perhaps a skull and cross-bones at top ; and the tombstones are crowded together, generally in the middle of towns, always near the places of worship, unless the church-yard is over-stocked. Scarcely ever is there a tree on the spot ;—in some remote villages alone are the graves ever decorated with flowers. All is stony, earthy, and dreary. It seems as if, after having rendered every thing before death as painful as possible, we endeavoured to subside into a sullen indifference, which contradicted itself by its own efforts.

The Greeks managed these things better. It is curious that we, who boast so much of our knowledge of the immortality of the soul, and of the glad hopes of an after-life, should take such pains to make the image of death melan-

choly; while, on the other hand, Gentiles, whom we treat with so much contempt for their ignorance on those heads, should do the reverse, and associate it with emblems that ought to belong rather to us. But the truth is that we know very little what we are talking about, when we speak, in the gross, of the ancients, and of their ideas of Deity and humanity. The very finest and most amiable part of our notions on those subjects comes originally from their philosophers;—all the rest, the gloom, the bad passions, the favouritism, are the work of other hands, who have borrowed the better materials as they proceeded, and then pretended an original right in them. Even the absurd parts of the Greek Mythology are less painfully absurd than those of any other; because, generally speaking, they are on the cheerful side instead of the gloomy. We would rather have a Deity who fell in love with the beautiful creatures of his own making than one who would consign nine hundred out of a thousand to destruction, for not believing ill of him.

But not to digress from the main subject.—The ancients did not render the idea of death so harshly distinct, as we do, from that of life. They did not extinguish all light and cheerfulness in their minds, and in things about them, as it were, on the instant; neither did they keep before one's eyes, with hypochondriacal pertinacity, the idea of death's heads and skeletons,

which, as representations of humanity, are something more absurd than the brick which the pedant carried about as the specimen of his house. They selected pleasant spots for sepulture, and outside the town ; they adorned their graves with arches and pillars,—with myrtles, lilies, and roses ; they kept up the social and useful idea of their great men by entombing them near the highway, so that every traveller paid his homage as he went ; and latterly, they reduced the dead body to ashes,—a clean and inoffensive substance,—gathered into a tasteful urn, and often accompanied it with other vessels of exquisite construction, on which were painted the most cheerful actions of the person departed, even to those of his every-day life,—the prize in the games, the toilet, the recollections of his marriages and friendships,—the figures of beautiful females,—every thing, in short, which seemed to keep up the idea of a vital principle, and to say, “ the creature, who so did and so enjoyed itself, cannot be all gone.” The image of the vital principle and of an after-life was, in fact, often and distinctly repeated on these vessels by a variety of emblems, animal and vegetable, particularly those mentioned in the beginning of this article, the image of Psyche or the soul by means of the butterfly,—an association which, in process of time, as other associations gathered about it, gave rise to the most exquisite allegory in the world, the story of *Cupid and Psyche*.

Now, we do not mean to say that every body who thinks as we do upon this subject should or can depart at once from existing customs, especially the chief ones. These things must either go gradually or by some convulsive movement in society, as others have gone ; and mere eccentricity is no help to their departure. What we cannot undo, let us only do as decently as possible ; but we might render the dying a great deal more comfortable by just daring a little to consider their comforts and not our puerility ; we might allow their rooms also to be more light and cheerful ; we might take pains to bring pleasanter associations about them altogether ; and when they were gone, we might cultivate our own a little better ; our tombstones might at least be in better taste ; we might take more care of our graves ; we might preserve our sick neighbours from the sound of the death-bell ; a single piece of ribbon or crape would surely be enough to guard us against the unweeting inquiries of friends, while, in the rest of our clothes, we might adopt, by means of a ring or a watch-ribbon, some cheerful, instead of gloomy, recollection of the person we had lost—a favourite colour, for instance, or device—and thus contrive to balance a grief which we must feel, and which, indeed, in its proper associations, it would not be desirable to avoid. Rousseau died gazing on the setting sun, and was buried under green trees. Petrarch, who seemed born to complete and

render glorious the idea of an author from first to last, was found dead in his study, with his head placidly resting on a book. What is there in deaths like these to make us look back with anguish, or to plunge into all sorts of gloominess and bad taste?

We know not whether it has ever struck any of our readers, but we seem to consider the relics of ancient taste, which we possess, as things of mere ornament, and forget that their uses may be in some measure preserved, so as to complete the idea of their beauty, and give them, as it were, a soul again. We place their urns and vases, for instance, about our apartments, but never think of putting any thing in them; yet when they are not absolutely too fragile, we might often do so,—fruit, flowers,—toilet utensils,—a hundred things, with a fine opportunity (to boot) of showing our taste in inscriptions. The Chinese, in the *Citizen of the World*, when he was shown the two large vases from his own country, was naturally amused to hear that they only served to fill up the room, and held no supply of tea in them as they did at home. A lady, a friend of ours, who shows in her countenance her origin from a country of taste, and who acts up to the promise of her countenance, is the only person, but one, whom we ever knew to turn antique ornament to account in this respect. She buried a favourite bird in a vase on her mantle-piece; and there the little rogue lies,

with more kind and tasteful associations about him than the greatest dust in Christendom. The other instance is that of two urns of marble, which have been turned as much as possible to the original purposes of such vessels, by becoming the depository of locks of hair. A lock of hair is an actual relic of the dead, as much so, in its proportion, as ashes, and more lively and recalling than even those. It is the part of us that preserves vitality longest ; it is a clean and elegant substance : and it is especially connected with ideas of tenderness, in the cheek or the eyes about which it may have strayed, and the handling we may have given it on the living head. The thoughts connected with such relics time gradually releases from grief itself, and softens into nothing but tender enjoyment ; and we know that, in the instance alluded to, the possessor of those two little urns would no more consent to miss them from his study than he would any other cheerful association that he could procure. It is a feeling, which he would not forego for a great deal, that the venerable and lovely dust to which they belonged lies in a village church-yard, and has left the most unfading part of it enclosed in graceful vessels.

L. H.

No. XIV.

ON THE NIGHT-MARE.

I do not hesitate to declare to the reader, even in this free-thinking age, that I am no small adept in the uses of the Occult Philosophy, as I shall thoroughly make manifest.—Be it known, then, that I am sometimes favoured with the visits of a nocturnal spirit, from whom I receive the most excellent lessons of wisdom. His appearance is not highly prepossessing, and the weight of his manner of teaching, joined to the season he chooses for that purpose, has in it something not a little tremendous; but the end of his instruction is the enjoyment of virtue and, as he is conscious of the alarming nature of his aspect, he takes leave of the initiated the moment they reduce his theory to practice. It is true, there are a number of foolish persons, living in and about this metropolis, who, instead of being grateful for his friendly offices, have affected to disdain them, in the hope of tiring him out, and thus getting rid of his disagreeable presence; but they could not have taken a worse method, for his benevolence is as unwearyed as his lessons and appearances are formidable, and these unphilosophic scorners are only punished every night of their lives in consequence. If any curious person wishes to see

him, the ceremony of summoning him to appear is very simple, though it varies according to the aspirant's immediate state of blood. With some, nothing more is required than the mastication of a few unripe plums or of a cucumber, just before midnight : others must take a certain portion of that part of a calf which is used for what are vulgarly called veal-cutlets : others, again, find the necessary charm in an omelet or an olio. For my part, I am so well acquainted with the different ceremonies that, without any preparation, I have only to lie in a particular posture, and the spirit is sure to make its appearance. The figures under which it presents itself are various, but it generally takes its position upon the breast in a shape altogether indescribable, and is accompanied with circumstances of alarm and obscurity, not a little resembling those which the philosophers underwent on their initiation into the Eleusinian and other mysteries. The first sensations you experience are those of a great oppression and inability to move ; these you endeavour to resist, but after an instant resign yourself to their control, or rather flatter yourself you will do so, for the sensation becomes so painful that in a moment you struggle into another effort, and if in this effort you happen to move yourself and cry out, the spirit is sure to be gone, for it detests a noise as heartily as a monk of La Trappe, a traveller in the Alps, or a thief. Could an intemperate per-

son in this situation be but philosopher enough to give himself up to the spirit's influence for a few minutes, he would see his visitant to great advantage, and gather as much knowledge at once as would serve him instead of a thousand short visits, and make him a good liver for months to come.

It was by this method, some time ago, that I not only obtained a full view of the spirit, but, gradually gathering strength from sufferance, as those who are initiated into any great wisdom must, contrived to enter into conversation with it. The substance of our dialogue I hereby present to the reader, for it is a mistaken notion of the pretenders to the Cabala, that to reveal the secrets on these occasions is to do harm, and incur the displeasure of our spiritual acquaintances. All the harm, as I have said before, is in not understanding the secrets properly, and explaining them for the benefit of mankind; and on this head I have an objection to make to that ancient and industrious order of Illuminati, the Freemasons, who, though they hold with my familiar that eating suppers is one of the high roads to experimental wisdom, differ with him in confining their knowledge to such persons as can purchase it.

I had returned at a late hour from the representation of a new comedy, and, after eating a sleepy and not very great supper, reclined myself on the sopha in a half sitting posture, and

took up a little Horace to see if I could keep my eyes open with a writer so full of contrast to what I had been hearing. I happened to pitch upon that Ode, *At O Deorum quisquis, &c.*, describing an ancient witches-meeting, and fell into an obscure kind of reverie upon the identity of popular superstition in different ages and nations. The comic dramatist, however, had been too much for me ; the weather, which had been warm, but was inclining to grow cloudy, conspired with my heaviness, and the only sounds to be heard were the ticking of a small clock in the room, and the fitful sighs of the wind as it arose without,

“The moaning herald of a weeping sky.”

By degrees my eyes closed, my hand with the book dropped one way, and my head dropped back the other upon a corner of the sopha.

When you are in a state the least adapted to bodily perception, it is well known that you are in the precise state for spiritual. I had not been settled, I suppose, for more than a quarter of an hour, when the lid of a veal-pie, which I had lately attacked, began swelling up and down with an extraordinary convulsion, and I plainly perceived a little figure rising from beneath it, which grew larger and larger as it ascended, and then advanced with great solemnity towards me over the dishes. This phenomenon, which I thought I had seen often before, but could not distinctly

remember how or where, was about two feet high, six inches of which, at least, went to the composition of its head. Between its jaws and shoulders there was no separation whatever, so that its face, which was very broad and pale, came immediately on its bosom, where it quivered without ceasing, in a very alarming manner, being, it seems, of a paralytic sensibility like blanc-mange. The fearfulness of this aspect was increased by two staring and intent eyes, a nose turned up, but large, and a pair of thick lips turned despondingly down at the corners. Its hair, which stuck about its ears like the quills of a porcupine, was partly concealed by a bolster rolled into a turban, and decorated with duck's feathers. The body was dressed in a kind of armour, of a substance resembling what is called crackling, and girded with a belt curiously studded with Spanish olives, in the middle of which, instead of pistols, were stuck two small bottles containing a fiery liquor. On its shoulders were wings shaped like the bat's, but much larger; its legs terminated in large feet of lead; and in its hands, which were of the same metal, and enormously disproportioned, it bore a Turkish bowstring.

At sight of this formidable apparition, I felt an indescribable and oppressive sensation, which by no means decreased as it came nearer and nearer, staring and shaking its face at me, and making as many ineffable grimaces as Munden

in a farce. It was in vain, however, I attempted to move ; I felt, all the time, like a leaden statue, or like Gulliver pinned to the ground by the Lilliputians ; and was wondering how my sufferings would terminate, when the phantom, by a spring off the table, pitched himself with all his weight upon my breast, and I thought began fixing his terrible bowstring. At this, as I could make no opposition, I determined at least to cry out as lustily as possible, and was beginning to make the effort, when the spirit motioned me to be quiet, and, retreating a little from my throat, said, in a low suffocating tone of voice, "Wilt thou never be philosopher enough to leave off sacrificing unto calf's flesh?"

"In the name of the Great Solomon's ring," I ejaculated, "what art thou?"

"My name," replied the being, a little angrily, "which thou wast unwittingly going to call out, is Mnptglnau-auw-auww, and I am Prince of the Night-mares."

"Ah, my Lord," returned I, "you will pardon my want of recollection, but I had never seen you in your full dress before, and your presence is not very composing to the spirits. Doubtless this is the habit in which you appeared, with the other genii, at the levee of the mighty Solomon."

"A fig for the mighty Solomon!" said the spirit, good-humouredly ; "this is the cant of

the Cabalists, who pretend to know so much about us. I assure you, Solomon trembled much more at me than I did at him. I found it necessary, notwithstanding all his wisdom, to be continually giving him advice ; and many were the quarrels I had on his account with Peor,

Dæmon of Sensuality, and a female devil named Ashtoreth."

"The world," said I, "my Prince, do not give you credit for so much benevolence."

"No," replied he, "the world are never just to their best advisers. My figure, it is true, is not the most prepossessing, and my manner of teaching is less so ; but I am nevertheless a benevolent spirit, and would do good to the most ungrateful of your fellow-creatures. This very night, between the hours of ten and one, I have been giving lessons to no less than twelve priests, and twenty-one citizens. The studious I attend somewhat later, and the people of fashion towards morning.—But as you seem inclined at last to make a proper use of my instructions, I will recount to you some of my adventures, if you please, that you may relate them to your countrymen, and teach them to appreciate the trouble I have with them."

"You are really obliging," said I, "and I should be all attention would you do me the favour to sit a little more lightly, for each of your fingers appears heavier than a porter's load, and, to say the truth, the very sight of that bowstring almost throttles me."

No. XV.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

AT these words the spectre gave a smile, which I can compare to nothing but the effect of vinegar on a death's head. However, he rose up, though very slowly, and I once more breathed with transport, like a person dropping into his chair after a long journey. He then seated himself with much dignity on the pillow at the other end of the sopha, and thus resumed the discourse:—"I have been among mankind, ever since the existence of cooks and bad consciences, and my office is two-fold, to give advice to the well-disposed, and to inflict punishment on the ill. The spirits over which I preside are of that class called by the ancients Incubi, but it was falsely supposed that we were fond of your handsome girls, as the Rosicrucians maintain, for it is our business to suppress, not encourage, the passions, as you may guess by my appearance."

"Pardon me," interrupted I, "but the poets and painters represent your Highness as riding about on horse-back; some of them even make you the horse itself, and it is thus that we have been taught to account for the term Nightmare."

Here the phantom gave another smile, which made me feel sympathetically about the mouth, as though one of my teeth was being drawn. "A pretty jest," said he: "as if a spiritual being had need of a horse to carry him ! The general name of my species in this country is of Saxon origin; the Saxons, uniting as they did the two natures of Britons and Germans, ate and drank with a vengeance; of course they knew me very well, and being continually visited by me in all my magnificence, called me, by way of eminence, the *Night Mara*, or *Spirit of Night*. As to the poets and painters, I do not know enough of them to be well acquainted with their misrepresentations of me, though all of those gentlemen who could afford it have been pretty intimate with me. The moralizing Epicurean, whom you have in your hand there, I knew very well. Very good things he wrote, to be sure, about temperance and lettuces; but he ate quite as good at Mecænas's table. You may see the delicate state of his faculties by the noise he makes about a little garlick. Anacreon was so fond of drinking and raking that he had little leisure to eat,—and I did not see him much till latterly, but then my visits were pretty constant and close. His wine killed him at last, and this is the event which his successors have so neatly shadowed forth as the effect of a grape-stone.—As rakes rather than eaters, I knew also Politian, Boccace, and other Italians, whose hot com-

plexion made them suffer for every excess. A great eater suffers the pains of a rake, and a rake, if he does not half starve himself, suffers the pains of a great eater. The French poets have lived too lightly to be much troubled with my attendance, and I cannot say I know much of your English ones. There was Congreve, indeed, who dined every day with a duchess, and had the gout: I visited him often enough, and once wreaked on him a pretty set of tortures under the figure of one Jeremy Collier. My Lord Rochester, who might have displayed so true a fancy of his own without my assistance, had scarcely a single idea with which I did not supply him, for five years together, during which time, you know, he confessed himself to have been in a state of intoxication. But I am sorry to say that I have had no small trouble with some of your poetical moralists, as well as men of pleasure. Something, I confess, must be allowed to Pope, whose constitution hardly allowed him an hour's enjoyment; but an invalid so fond of good things might have spared the citizens and clergy a little. It must be owned also that the good temper he really possessed did much honour to his philosophy; but it would have been greater could he have denied himself that silver saucepan. It seduced him into a hundred miseries. One night, in particular, I remember, after he had made a very sharp attack on Addison and a dish of lampreys, he

was terribly used by my spirits, who appeared to him in the shapes of so many flying pamphlets : he awoke in great horror, crying out with a ghastly smile, like a man who pretends to go easily through a laborious wager, ' These things are my diversion.' With regard to Dr. Johnson, about whose masticating faculties so much has been said, people do not consider his great bulk and love of exercise. He may have eaten twice as much as any one of his companions; but then he was twice as large, and wanted twice as much enjoyment. I assure you, all the tea he drank did not hurt him a jot. Consider the size of the cups in those days, and of the great man who emptied them, and it was nothing but an April shower on Plinlimmon. It is true, he compelled my attendance somewhat too often, but no oftener than men of less size and much less right. The worst night he passed was after he received his pension : he thought he was Osborne the bookseller, and that he was knocked down with the second volume of his folio dictionary. As to your painters, I have known still less of them, though I am acquainted with one now living who has so long tried to be horrible that he has at last spoiled his genius, and become entirely so. I once sat to this gentleman at midnight for my portrait, and the likeness is allowed by all of us to be excellent."

" Well," interrupted I, " but it is not at all like you in your present aspect."

"No," replied the phantom, "it is my poetical look. I have all sorts of looks and shapes, civic, political, and poetical. Last night, for instance, I appeared to a city baronet, and sat upon his chest in the shape of a bale of goods. I then went to a Minister's, who had been at a dinner with his brethren, to consult what they should do six months hence against a pressing emergency; and after I had horrified him with all sorts of fancies about taxes, and Whigs, and Reformers, want of place, want of words, political convulsions, Austria, and Bonaparte, I finished my night's work with a still greater personage, upon whom I took my seat in the likeness of a huge and indescribable compound, made up of tight clothes, turtle, and quart bottles, with a double-faced wig-block for the head, and a jacket laced with bills and billets-doux, and hung with needles and thread for epaulets. It is by particular favour," continued he, "that I appear to you as I really am; but as you have not seen many of my shapes, I will, if you please, give you a sample of some of my best."

"Oh, by no means," said I, somewhat hastily, "I can imagine quite enough from your descriptions. The philosophers certainly ill-used you when they represented you as a seducer."

"The false philosophers did," replied the spectre; "the real philosophers knew me better. It was at my instance that Pythagoras forbade

the eating of beans ; Plato owed some of his schemes to my hints, though, I confess, not his best ; and I also knew Socrates very well from my intimacy with Alcibiades, but the familiar that attended him was of a much higher order than myself, and rendered my services unnecessary. However, my veneration for that illustrious man was so great that, on the night when he died, I revenged him finely on his two principal enemies. People talk of the flourishing state of vice, and the happiness which guilty people sometimes enjoy in contrast with the virtuous ; but they know nothing of what they talk. You should have seen Alexander in bed after one of his triumphant feasts, or Domitian or Heliogabalus after a common supper, and you would have seen who was the true monarch, the master of millions, or the master of himself. The Prince retired perhaps amidst lights, garlands, and perfumes, with the pomp of music, and through a host of bowing heads : every thing he saw and touched reminded him of empire ; his bed was of the costliest furniture, and he reposed by the side of beauty. Reposed, did I say ? As well might you stretch a man on a gilded rack, and fan him into forgetfulness. No sooner had he obtained a little slumber, but myself and other spirits revenged the crimes of the day ; in a few minutes the convulsive snatches of his hands and features announce the rising agitation ; his face blackens and swells ;

his clenched hands grasp the drapery about him ; he tries to turn, but cannot, for a hundred horrors, the least of which is the fear of death, crowd on him and wither his faculties, till at last, by an effort of despair, he wakes with a fearful outcry, and springs from the bed, pale, trembling, and aghast, afraid of the very assistance he would call, and terrified at the consciousness of himself. Such are the men before whom millions of you rational creatures consent to tremble."

" You talk like an orator," said I ; " but every ambitious prince, I suppose, has not horrors like these, for every one is neither so luxurious as Alexander, nor so indolent and profligate as a Domitian or Heliogabalus. Conquerors, I should think, are generally too full of business to have leisure for consciences and night-mares."

" Why, a great deal may be done," answered the spirit, " against horrors of any kind by mere dint of industry. But too much business, especially of a nature that keeps passion on the stretch, will sometimes perform the office of indolence and luxury, and turn revengefully upon the mind. To this were owing, in great measure, the epilepsies of Cæsar and Mohammed. In the same way, I revenged the world on Dionysius of Syracuse, Henry VIII., Charles IX., on monks, nabobs, inquisitors, women of pleasure, and other tormentors of mankind. With the faces of most of the Roman Emperors I am

as familiar as an antiquary, particularly from Tiberius down to Caligula ; and again from Constantine downwards. But if I punished the degenerate Romans, I nevertheless punished their enemies too. They were not aware, when scourged by Attila, what nights their tormentor passed. Luckily for justice, he brought from Germany not only fire and sword, but a true German appetite. I know not a single conqueror of modern times who equalled him in horror of dreaming, unless it was a little, spare, aguey, peevish, supper-eating fellow, whom you call Frederick the Great. Those exquisite ragouts, the enjoyment of which added new relish to the sarcasms he dealt about him with a royalty so unanswerable, sufficiently revenged the sufferers for their submission. Nevertheless, he dealt by his dishes as some men do by their mistresses ; he loved them the more they tormented him. Poor Trenck, with his bread and water in the dungeon of Magdeburg, enjoyed a repose fifty times more serene than the royal philosopher in his palace of Sans Souci, or Without Care. — Even on the approach of death, this great conqueror — this warrior full of courage and sage speculation — could not resist the customary pepper and sauce piquant, though he knew he should inevitably see me at night; armed with all his sins, and turning his bed into a nest of monsters."

"Heaven be praised," cried I, "that he had

a taste so retributive ! The people under arbitrary governments must needs have a respect for the dishes at court. I now perceive, more than ever, the little insight we have into the uses of things. Formerly one might have imagined that eating and drinking had no use but the vulgar one of sustaining life ; but it is manifest that they save the law a great deal of trouble, and the writers of cookery books can be considered in no other light than as expounders of a criminal code. Really, I shall hereafter approach a dish of turtle with becoming awe, and already begin to look upon a ragout as something very equitable and inflexible."

" You do justice," observed the spirit, " to those eminent dishes, and in the only proper way. People who sit down to a feast with their joyous darting of eyes and rubbing of hands, would have very different sensations did they know what they were about to attack. You must know, that the souls of tormented animals survive after death, and become instruments of punishment for mankind. Most of these are under my jurisdiction, and form great part of the monstrous shapes that haunt the slumbers of the intemperate. Fish crimped alive, lobsters boiled alive, and pigs whipped to death, become the most active and formidable spirits, and if the object of their vengeance take too many precautions to drown his senses when asleep, there is the subtle and fell Gout waiting to tor-

ment his advanced years, a spirit partaking of the double nature of the Night-mare and Salamander, and more terrible than any one of us, inasmuch as he makes his attacks by day as well as by night."

"I shudder to think," interrupted I, "even of the monstrous combinations which have disturbed my own rest, and formed so horrible a contrast to the gaiety of a social supper."

"Oh, as for that matter," said the phantom, in a careless tone, "you know nothing of the horrors of a glutton, or an epicure, or a nefarious debauchee. Suffocation with bolsters, heaping of rocks upon the chest, buryings alive, and strugglings to breathe without a mouth, are among their common-place sufferings. The dying glutton in *La Fontaine* never was so reasonable as when he desired to have the remainder of his fish. He was afraid that if he did not immediately go off, he might have a nap before he died, which would have been a thousand times worse than death. Had *Apicius*, *Ciacco the Florentine*, *Dartineuf*, or *Quin*, been able and inclined to paint what they had seen, *Callot* would have been a mere *Cipriani* to them. I could produce you a jolly fellow, a corpulent nobleman, from the next hotel, the very counterpart of the glutton in *Rubens's Fall of the Damned*, who could bring together a more hideous combination of fancies than are to be found in *Milton's Hell*. He is not without infor-

mation and a disposition naturally good, but a long series of bad habits have made him what they call a man of pleasure, that is to say, he takes all sorts of pains to get a little enjoyment which shall produce him a world of misery. One of his passions, which he *will* not resist, is for a particular dish, pungent, savoury, and multifarious, which sends him almost every night into Tartarus. At this minute, the spectres of the supper-table are busy with him, and Dante himself could not have worked up a greater horror for the punishment of vice than the one he is undergoing. He fancies that though he is *himself*, he is nevertheless four different beings at once, of the most odious and contradictory natures,—that his own indescribable feelings are fighting bodily and maliciously with each other,—and that there is no chance left him either for escape, forgetfulness, or cessation."

"Gracious powers!" cried I; "what, all this punishment for a dish?"

"You do not recollect," answered the spirit, "what an abuse such excesses are of the divine gift of reason, and how they distort the best tendencies of human nature. The whole end of existence is perverted by not taking proper care of the body. This man will rise, to-morrow morning, pallid, nervous, and sullen; his feelings must be reinforced with a dram to bear the ensuing afternoon; and I foresee that the ill-temper arising from his debauch will lead him

into a very serious piece of injustice against his neighbour. To the same cause may be traced fifty of the common disquietudes of life, its caprices, and irritabilities. To-night a poor fellow is fretful because his supper was not rich enough, but to-morrow night he will be in torture because it was too rich. An hysterical lady shall flatter herself she is very sentimentally miserable, when most likely her fine feelings are to be deduced, not from sentiment, but a surfeit. Your Edinburgh wits thought they had laid down a very droll impossibility when they talked of cutting a man's throat with a pound of pickled salmon, whereas much less dishes have performed as wonderful exploits. I have known a hard egg to fill a household with dismay for days together ; a cucumber has disinherited an only son ; and a whole province has incurred the royal anger of its master at the instigation of a set of woodcocks."

"It is a thousand pities," said I, "that history, instead of habituating us to love 'the pomp and circumstance' of bad passions, cannot trace the actions of men to their real sources."

"Well, well," said the spirit, "now that you are getting grave on the subject, I think I may bid you adieu. Your nation has produced excellent philosophers, who were not the less wise for knowing little of me. Pray tell your countrymen that they are neither philosophic nor politic in feasting as they do on all occa-

sions, joyful, sorrowful, or indifferent: that good sense, good temper, and the good of their country, are distinct things from indigestion; and that, when they think to shew their patriotic devotion by carving and gormandizing, they are no wiser than the bacchanals of old, who took serpents between their teeth, and tortured themselves with knives."

So saying, the spectre rose, and stretching out his right hand, with a look which I believe he intended to be friendly, advanced towards me; he then took my hand in his own, and perceiving signs of alarm in my countenance, burst into a fit of laughter, which was the very quintessence of discord, and baffles all description, being a compound of the gabblings of geese, grunting of hogs, quacking of ducks, squabbling of turkeys, and winding up of smoke-jacks. When the fit was pretty well over, he gave me a squeeze of the hand, which made me jump up with a spring of the knees, and gradually enveloping himself in a kind of steam, vanished with a noise like the crash of crockery ware. I looked about me; I found that my right hand, which held the Horace, had got bent under me, and gone to sleep, and that, in my sudden start, I had kicked half the dishes from the supper-table.

L. H.

No. XVI.

ON BEAUTY.

IT is about sixty years ago that Sir Joshua Reynolds, in three papers which he wrote in the *Idler*, advanced the notion, which has prevailed very much ever since, that Beauty was entirely dependant on custom, or on the conformity of objects to a given standard. Now, I could never persuade myself that custom, or the association of ideas, though a very powerful, was the only, principle of the preference which the mind gives to certain objects over others. Novelty is surely one source of pleasure; otherwise we cannot account for the well-known epigram, beginning—

“ Two happy things in marriage are allowed,” &c.

Nor can we help thinking that, besides custom, or the conformity of certain objects to others of the same general class, there is also a certain conformity of objects to themselves, a symmetry of parts, a principle of proportion, gradation, harmony (call it what you will), which makes certain things naturally pleasing or beautiful, and the want of it the contrary.

We will not pretend to define what Beauty is, after so many learned authors have failed; but we shall attempt to give some examples of what constitutes it, to show that it is in some way

inherent in the object, and that if custom is a second nature, there is another nature which ranks before it. Indeed, the idea that all pleasure and pain depend on the association of ideas is manifestly absurd: there must be something in itself pleasurable or painful, before it could become possible for the feelings of pleasure or pain to be transferred by association from one object to another.

Regular features are generally accounted handsome; but regular features are those, the outlines of which answer most nearly to each other, or undergo the fewest abrupt changes. We shall attempt to explain this idea by a reference to the Greek and African face; the first of which is beautiful, because it is made up of lines corresponding with or melting into each other: the last is not so, because it is made up almost entirely of contradictory lines and sharp angular projections.

The general principle of the difference between the two heads is this:—The forehead of the Greek is square and upright, and, as it were, overhangs the rest of the face, except the nose, which is a continuation of it almost in an even line. In the Negro or African, the tip of the nose is the most projecting part of the face; and from that point the features retreat back, both upwards towards the forehead, and downwards to the chin. This last form is an approximation to the shape of the head of the animal, as the former bears the strongest stamp of humanity.

The Grecian nose is regular, the African irregular. In other words, the Grecian nose seen in profile forms nearly a straight line with the forehead, and falls into the upper lip by two curves, which balance one another: seen in front, the two sides are nearly parallel to each other, and the nostrils and lower part form regular curves, answering to one another, and to the contours of the mouth. On the contrary, the African pug-nose is more "like an ace of clubs." Whichever way you look at it, it presents the appearance of a triangle. It is narrow, and drawn to a point at top—broad and flat at bottom. The point is peaked, and recedes abruptly to the level of the forehead or the mouth, and the nostrils are as if they were drawn up with hooks towards each other. All the lines cross each other at sharp angles. The forehead of the Greeks is flat and square, till it is rounded at the temples; the African forehead, like the ape's, falls back towards the top, and spreads out at the sides, so as to form an angle with the cheek-bones. The eyebrows of the Greeks are either straight, so as to sustain the lower part of the tablet of the forehead, or gently arched, so as to form the outer circle of the curves of the eyelids. The form of the eyes gives all the appearance of orbs, full, swelling, and involved within each other; the African eyes are flat, narrow at the corners, in the shape of a tortoise, and the eyebrows fly off slantwise to

the sides of the forehead. The idea of the superiority of the Greek face in this respect is admirably expressed in Spenser's description of Belphœbe :

“ Her ivory forehead, full of bounty brave,
Like a broad table did itself dispread,
For love therein his triumphs to engrave,
And write the battles of his great godhead.

* * * *

“ Upon her eyelids many Graces sat,
Under the shadow of her even brows.”

The head of the girl in the *Transfiguration* (which Raphael took from the *Niobe*) has the same correspondence and exquisite involution of the outline of the forehead, the eyebrows, and the eyes (circle within circle) which we here speak of. Every part of that delightful head is blended together, and every sharp projection moulded and softened down, with the feeling of a sculptor, or as if nothing should be left to offend the touch as well as eye. Again, the Greek mouth is small, and little wider than the lower part of the nose: the lips form waving lines, nearly answering to each other; the African mouth is twice as wide as the nose, projects in front, and falls back towards the ears—is sharp and triangular, and consists of one protruding and one distended lip. The chin of the Greek face is round and indented, curled in, forming a fine oval with the outline of the cheeks, which resemble the two halves of a

plane parallel with the forehead, and rounded off like it. The Negro chin falls inwards like a dewlap, is nearly bisected in the middle, flat at bottom, and joined abruptly to the rest of the face, the whole contour of which is made up of jagged cross-grained lines. The African physiognomy appears, indeed, splitting in pieces, starting out in every oblique direction, and marked by the most sudden and violent changes throughout: the whole of the Grecian face blends with itself in a state of the utmost harmony and repose.* There is a harmony of expression as well as a symmetry of form. We sometimes see a face melting into beauty by the force of sentiment—an eye that, in its liquid mazes, for ever expanding and for ever retiring within itself, draws the soul after it, and tempts the rash beholder to his fate. This is, perhaps, what Werter meant, when he says of Charlotte, “ Her full dark eyes are ever before me, like a sea, like a precipice.” The historical expression is the consistent and harmonious, whatever

* There is, however, in the African physiognomy a grandeur and a force, arising from this uniform character of violence and abruptness. It is consistent with itself throughout. Entire deformity can only be found where the features have not only no symmetry or softness in themselves, but have no connection with one another, presenting every variety of wretchedness, and a jumble of all sorts of defects, such as we see in Hogarth or in the streets of London; for instance, a large bottle-nose, with a small mouth twisted awry.

in thought or feeling communicates the same movement, whether voluptuous or impassioned, to all the parts of the face, the mouth, the eyes, the forehead, and shows that they are all actuated by the same spirit. For this reason it has been observed that all intellectual and impassioned faces are historical,—the heads of philosophers, poets, lovers, and madmen.

Motion is beautiful as it implies either continuity or gradual change. The motion of a hawk is beautiful, either returning in endless circles with suspended wings, or darting right forward in one level line upon its prey. I have, when a boy, often watched the glittering down of the thistle, at first scarcely rising above the ground, and then, mingling with the gale, borne into the upper sky with varying fantastic motion. How delightful!—how beautiful! All motion is beautiful that is not contradictory to itself—that is free from sudden jerks and shocks—that is either sustained by the same impulse, or gradually reconciles different impulses together. Swans resting on the calm bosom of a lake, in which their image is reflected, or moved up and down with the heaving of the waves, though by this the double image is disturbed, are equally beautiful. Homer describes Mercury as flinging himself from the top of Olympus, and skimming the surface of the ocean. This is lost in Pope's translation, who suspends him on the incumbent air. The beauty of the original

image consists in the idea which it conveys of smooth, uninterrupted speed, of the evasion of every let or obstacle to the progress of the god.* Awkwardness is occasioned by a difficulty

* The following version, communicated by a classical friend is exact and elegant :

“ He said ; and straight the herald Argicide
 Beneath his feet his winged sandals tied,
 Immortal, golden,—that his flight could bear
 O'er seas and lands, like waftage of the air.
 His rod, too, that can close the eyes of men,
 In balmy sleep, and open them again,
 He took, and holding it in hand, went flying :
 Till, from Pieria's top the sea descrying,
 Down to it sheer he dropp'd ; and scour'd away
 Like the wild gull, that, fishing o'er the bay,
 Flaps on, with pinions dipping in the brine ;—
 So went on the far sea the shape divine.”

Odyssey, Book V.

“ ————— That was Arion crown'd :
 So went he playing on the wat'ry plain.”

Fairy Queen.

There is a striking description in Mr. Burke's *Reflections* of the late Queen of France, whose charms had left their poison in the heart of this Irish orator and patriot, and set the world in a ferment sixteen years afterwards. “ And surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision.”—The idea is in *Don Quixote*, where the Duenna speaks of the air with which the Duchess “ treads, or rather seems to disdain the ground she walks on.” We have heard the same account of the gracefulness of *Maria Antoinette* from an artist, who saw her at *Versailles* much about the same time that Mr. Burke did. He stood in one corner of a little antichamber, and, as the doors were narrow, she was obliged to pass sideways, with her hoop. She glided by him in an instant, as if borne on a cloud.

in moving, or by disjointed movements, that distract the attention and defeat each other. Grace is the absence of every thing that indicates pain or difficulty, or hesitation or incongruity. The only graceful dancer I ever saw was Deshayes, the Frenchman. He came on bounding like a stag. It was not necessary to have seen good dancing before to know that this was really fine. Whoever has seen the sea in motion, the branches of a tree waving in the air, would instantly perceive the resemblance.—Flexibility and grace are to be found in nature as well as at the Opera. Mr. Burke, in his *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*, has very admirably described the bosom of a beautiful woman, almost entirely with reference to the ideas of motion. Those outlines are beautiful which describe pleasant motions. A fine use is made of this principle by one of the apocryphal writers, in describing the form of the rainbow. “He hath set his bow in the heavens, and his hands have bended it.” Harmony in colour has not been denied to be a natural property of objects, consisting in the gradations of intermediate colours. The principle appears to be here the same as in some of the former instances. The effect of colour, in Titian’s Bath of Diana at the Marquis of Stafford’s, is perhaps the finest in the world, made up of the richest contrasts, blended together by the most masterly gradations. Harmony of sound depends apparently

on the same principle as harmony of colour. Rhyme depends on the pleasure derived from a recurrence of similar sounds, as symmetry of features does on the correspondence of the different outlines. The prose style of Dr. Johnson originated in the same principle. Its secret consisted in rhyming on the sense, and balancing one half of the sentence uniformly and systematically against the other. The Hebrew poetry was constructed in the same manner.

W. H.

No. XVII.

ON IMITATION.

OBJECTS in themselves disagreeable or indifferent often please in the imitation. A brick-floor, a pewter-plate, an ugly cur barking, a Dutch boor smoking or playing at skittles, the inside of a shambles, a fishmonger's or a green-grocer's stall, have been made very interesting as pictures by the fidelity, skill, and spirit with which they have been copied. One source of the pleasure thus received is undoubtedly the surprise or feeling of admiration, occasioned by the unexpected coincidence between the imitation and the object. The deception, however, not only pleases at first sight, or from mere novelty; but it continues to please upon farther acquaintance, and in proportion to the insight we acquire into

the distinctions of nature and of art. By far the most numerous class of connoisseurs are the admirers of pictures of *still life*, which have nothing but the elaborateness of the execution to recommend them. One chief reason, it should seem, then, why imitation pleases, is because, by exciting curiosity, and inviting a comparison between the object and the representation, it opens a new field of inquiry, and leads the attention to a variety of details and distinctions not perceived before. This latter source of the pleasure derived from imitation has never been properly insisted on.

The anatomist is delighted with a coloured plate, conveying the exact appearance of the progress of certain diseases, or of the internal parts and dissections of the human body. We have known a Jennerian Professor as much enraptured with a delineation of the different stages of vaccination as a florist with a bed of tulips, or an auctioneer with a collection of Indian shells. But, in this case, we find that not only the imitation pleases,—the objects themselves give as much pleasure to the professional inquirer as they would pain to the uninitiated. The learned amateur is struck with the beauty of the coats of the stomach laid bare, or contemplates with eager curiosity the transverse section of the brain, divided on the new Spurzheim principles. It is here then the number of the parts, their distinctions, connections,

structure, uses ; in short, an entire new set of ideas, which occupies the mind of the student, and overcomes the sense of pain and repugnance, which is the only feeling that the sight of a dead and mangled body presents to ordinary men. It is the same in art as in science. The painter of still life, as it is called, takes the same pleasure in the object as the spectator does in the imitation ; because by habit he is led to perceive all those distinctions in nature, to which other persons never pay any attention till they are pointed out to them in the picture. The vulgar only see nature as it is reflected to them from art ; the painter sees the picture in nature, before he transfers it to the canvass. He refines, he analyzes, he remarks fifty things, which escape common eyes ; and this affords a distinct source of reflection and amusement to him, independently of the beauty or grandeur of the objects themselves, or of their connection with other impressions besides those of sight. The charm of the Fine Arts then does not consist in any thing peculiar to imitation, even where only imitation is concerned, since *there*, where art exists in the highest perfection, namely, in the mind of the artist, the object excites the same or greater pleasure, before the imitation exists. Imitation renders an object displeasing in itself a source of pleasure, not by repetition of the same idea, but by suggesting new ideas, by detecting new properties, and endless shades

of difference,—just as a close and continued contemplation of the object itself would do. Art shews us nature, divested of the medium of our prejudices. It divides and decompounds objects into a thousand curious parts, which may be full of variety, beauty, and delicacy in themselves, though the object to which they belong may be disagreeable in its general appearance, or by association with other ideas. A painted marigold is inferior to a painted rose only in form and colour: it loses nothing in point of smell. Yellow hair is perfectly beautiful in a picture. To a person lying with his face close to the ground in a summer's day, the blades of spear-grass will appear like tall forest trees, shooting up into the sky; as an insect seen through a microscope is magnified into an elephant. Art is the microscope of the mind which sharpens the wit as the other does the sight; and converts every object into a little universe in itself.* Art may be said to draw aside the veil from nature. To those who are perfectly

* In a fruit or flower-piece by Vanhuysen, the minutest details acquire a certain grace and beauty from the delicacy with which they are finished. The eye dwells with a giddy delight on the liquid drops of dew, on the gauze wings of an insect, on the hair and feathers of a bird's nest, the streaked and speckled egg-shells, the fine legs of the little travelling caterpillar. Who will suppose that the painter had not the same pleasure in detecting these nice distinctions in nature that the critic has in tracing them in the picture?

unskilled in the practice, unimbued with the principles of art, most objects present only a confused mass. The pursuit of art is liable to be carried to a contrary excess, as where it produces a rage for the *picturesque*. You cannot go a step with a person of this class, but he stops you to point out some choice bit of landscape, or fancied improvement, and teases you almost to death with the frequency and insignificance of his discoveries!

It is a common opinion (which may be worth noticing here) that the study of physiognomy has a tendency to make people satirical, and the knowledge of art to make them fastidious in their taste. Knowledge may indeed afford a handle to ill-nature ; but it takes away the principal temptation to its exercise, by supplying the mind with better resources against *ennui*. Idiots are always mischievous ; and the most superficial persons are the most disposed to find fault, because they understand the fewest things. The English are more apt than any other nation to treat foreigners with contempt, because they seldom see any thing but their own dress and manners ; and it is only in petty provincial towns that you meet with persons who pride themselves on being satirical. In every country place in England there are one or two persons of this description who keep the whole neighbourhood in terror. It is not to be denied that the study of the *ideal* in art, if separated from

the study of nature, may have the effect above stated, of producing dissatisfaction and contempt for every thing but itself, as all affectation must; but to the genuine artist, truth, nature, beauty, are almost different names for the same thing.

Imitation interests then by exciting a more intense perception of truth, and calling out the powers of observation and comparison; wherever this effect takes place, the interest follows of course, with or without the imitation, whether the object is real or artificial. The gardener delights in the streaks of a tulip, or “pansy freak’d with jet;” the mineralogist, in the varieties of certain strata, because he understands them. Knowledge is pleasure as well as power. A work of art has in this respect no advantage over a work of nature, except inasmuch as it furnishes an additional stimulus to curiosity. Again, natural objects please, in proportion as they are uncommon, by fixing the attention more steadily on their beauties or differences. The same principle of the effect of novelty, in exciting the attention, may account perhaps for the extraordinary discoveries and lies told by travellers, who, opening their eyes for the first time in foreign parts, are startled at every object they meet.

Why the excitement of intellectual activity pleases, is not here the question; but that it does so is a general and acknowledged law of

the human mind. We grow attached to the mathematics only from finding out their truth ; and their utility chiefly consists (at present) in the contemplative pleasure they afford to the student. Lines, points, angles, squares, and circles, are not interesting in themselves ; they become so by the power of mind exerted in comprehending their properties and relations. People dispute for ever about Hogarth. The question has not at least, in one respect, been fairly stated. The merit of his pictures does not so much depend on the nature of the subject as on the knowledge displayed of it, on the number of ideas they excite, on the fund of thought and observation contained in them. They are to be looked on as works of science ; they gratify our love of truth ; they fill up the void of the mind : they are a series of plates of natural history, and also of that most interesting part of natural history, the history of man. The superiority of high art over the common or mechanical consists in combining truth of imitation with beauty and grandeur of subject. The historical painter is superior to the flower-painter, because he combines or ought to combine human interests and passions with the same power of imitating external nature ; or, indeed, with greater, for the greatest difficulty of imitation is the power of imitating expression. The difficulty of copying increases with our knowledge of the object ; and that again with

the interest we take in it.—The same argument might be applied to shew that the poet and painter of imagination are superior to the mere philosopher or man of science, because they exercise the powers of reason and intellect combined with nature and passion. They treat of the highest categories of the human soul, pleasure and pain.

From the foregoing train of reasoning, we may easily account for the too great tendency of art to run into pedantry and affectation. There is “a pleasure in art which none but artists feel.” They see beauty where others see nothing of the sort, in wrinkles, deformity, and old age. They see it in Titian’s Schoolmaster as well as in Raphael’s Galatea; in the dark shadows of Rembrandt as well as in the splendid colours of Rubens; in an angel’s or in a butterfly’s wings. They see with different eyes from the multitude. But true genius, though it has new sources of pleasure opened to it, does not lose its sympathy with humanity. It combines truth of imitation with effect, the parts with the whole, the means with the end. The mechanic artist sees only that which nobody else sees, and is conversant only with the technical language and difficulties of his art. A painter, if shewn a picture, will generally dwell upon the academic skill displayed in it, and the knowledge of the received rules of composition. A musician, if asked to play a tune,

will select that which is the most difficult and the least intelligible. The poet will be struck with the harmony of versification, or the elaborateness of the arrangement in a composition. The conceits in Shakspeare were his greatest delight ; and, improving upon this perverse method of judging, the German writers, Goëthe and Schiller, look upon Werter and the Robbers as the worst of all their works, because they are the most popular. Some artists among ourselves have carried the same principle to a singular excess.* If professors themselves are liable to this kind of pedantry, connoisseurs and dilettanti, who have less sensibility and more affectation, are almost wholly swayed by it. They see nothing in a picture but the execution. They are proud of their knowledge, in proportion as it is a secret. The worst judges of

* We here allude particularly to Turner, the ablest landscape painter now living, whose pictures are, however, too much abstractions of aerial perspective, and representations not so properly of the objects of nature as of the medium through which they are seen. They are the triumph of the knowledge of the artist, and of the power of the pencil over the barrenness of the subject. They are pictures of the elements of air, earth, and water — The artist delights to go back to the first chaos of the world, or to that state of things when the waters were separated from the dry land, and light from darkness, but as yet no living thing nor tree bearing fruit was seen upon the face of the earth. All is "without form and void." Some one said of his landscapes that they were *pictures of nothing, and very like.*

pictures in the United Kingdom are, first, picture-dealers; next, perhaps, the Directors of the British Institution; and after them, in all probability, the Members of the Royal Academy.

W. H.

No. XVIII.

ON GUSTO.

GUSTO in art is power or passion defining any object.—It is not so difficult to explain this term in what relates to expression (of which it may be said to be the highest degree) as in what relates to things without expression, to the natural appearances of objects, as mere colour or form. In one sense, however, there is hardly any object entirely devoid of expression, without some character of power belonging to it, some precise association with pleasure or pain: and it is in giving this truth of character from the truth of feeling, whether in the highest or the lowest degree, but always in the highest degree of which the subject is capable, that gusto consists.

There is a gusto in the colouring of Titian. Not only do his heads seem to think—his bodies seem to feel. This is what the Italians mean by the *morbidezza* of his flesh-colour. It seems

sensitive and alive all over ; not merely to have the look and texture of flesh, but the feeling in itself. For example, the limbs of his female figures have a luxurious softness and delicacy which appears conscious of the pleasure of the beholder. As the objects themselves in nature would produce an impression on the sense, distinct from every other object, and having something divine in it, which the heart owns and the imagination consecrates, the objects in the picture preserve the same impression, absolute, unimpaired, stamped with all the truth of passion, the pride of the eye, and the charm of beauty. Rubens makes his flesh-colour like flowers ; Albano's is like ivory ; Titian's is like flesh, and like nothing else. It is as different from that of other painters as the skin is from a piece of white or red drapery thrown over it. The blood circulates here and there, the blue veins just appear, the rest is distinguished throughout only by that sort of tingling sensation to the eye which the body feels within itself. This is gusto.—Vandyke's flesh-colour, though it has great truth and purity, wants gusto. It has not the internal character, the living principle in it. It is a smooth surface, not a warm, moving mass. It is painted without passion, with indifference. The hand only has been concerned. The impression slides off from the eye, and does not, like the tones of Titian's pencil, leave a sting behind it in the

mind of the spectator. The eye does not acquire a taste or appetite for what it sees. In a word, gusto in painting is where the impression made on one sense excites by affinity those of another.

Michael Angelo's forms are full of gusto. They every where obtrude the sense of power upon the eye. His limbs convey an idea of muscular strength, of moral grandeur, and even of intellectual dignity: they are firm, commanding, broad, and massy, capable of executing with ease the determined purposes of the will. His faces have no other expression than his figures, conscious power and capacity. They appear only to think what they shall do, and to know that they can do it. This is what is meant by saying that his style is hard and masculine. It is the reverse of Correggio's, which is effeminate. That is, the gusto of Michael Angelo consists in expressing energy of will without proportionable sensibility, Correggio's in expressing exquisite sensibility without energy of will. In Correggio's faces as well as figures we see neither bones nor muscles, but then what a soul is there, full of sweetness and of grace—pure, playful, soft, angelical! There is sentiment enough in a hand painted by Correggio to set up a school of history painters. Whenever we look at the hands of Correggio's women or of Raphael's, we always wish to touch them.

Again, Titian's landscapes have a prodigious gusto, both in the colouring and forms. We

shall never forget one that we saw many years ago in the Orleans Gallery, of Acteon hunting. It had a brown, mellow, autumnal look. The sky was of the colour of stone. The winds seemed to sing through the rustling branches of the trees, and already you might hear the twanging of bows resound through the tangled mazes of the wood. Mr. West, we understand, has this landscape. He will know if this description of it is just. The landscape background of the St. Peter Martyr is another well known instance of the power of this great painter to give a romantic interest and an appropriate character to the objects of his pencil, where every circumstance adds to the effect of the scene,—the bold trunks of the tall forest trees, the trailing ground plants, with that cold convent spire rising in the distance, amidst the blue sapphire mountains and the golden sky.

Rubens has a great deal of gusto in his Fauns and Satyrs, and in all that expresses motion, but in nothing else. Rembrandt has it in every thing; every thing in his pictures has a tangible character. If he puts a diamond in the ear of a Burgomaster's wife, it is of the first water; and his furs and stuffs are proof against a Russian winter. Raphael's gusto was only in expression; he had no idea of the character of any thing but the human form. The dryness and poverty of his style in other respects is a phenomenon in the art. His trees are like sprigs of grass stuck

in a book of botanical specimens. Was it that Raphael never had time to go beyond the walls of Rome? That he was always in the streets, at church, or in the bath? He was not one of the Society of Arcadians.*

Claude's landscapes, perfect as they are, want gusto. This is not easy to explain. They are perfect abstractions of the visible images of things; they speak the visible language of nature truly. They resemble a mirror or a microscope. To the eye only they are more perfect than any other landscapes that ever were or will be painted; they give more of nature, as cognizable by one sense alone; but they lay an equal stress on all visible impressions; they do not interpret one sense by another; they do not distinguish the character of different objects as we are taught, and can only be taught, to distinguish them by their effect on the different senses. That is, his eye wanted imagination: it did not strongly sympathize with his other

* Raphael not only could not paint a landscape; he could not paint people in a landscape. He could not have painted the heads or the figures, or even the dresses, of the St. Peter Martyr. His figures have always an *in-door* look, that is, a set, determined, voluntary, dramatic character, arising from their own passions, or a watchfulness of those of others, and want that wild uncertainty of expression which is connected with the accidents of nature and the changes of the elements. He has nothing *romantic* about him.

faculties. He saw the atmosphere, but he did not feel it. He painted the trunk of a tree or a rock in the foreground as smooth—with as complete an abstraction of the gross, tangible impression, as any other part of the picture; his trees are perfectly beautiful, but quite immovable; they have a look of enchantment. In short, his landscapes are unequalled imitations of nature, released from its subjection to the elements,—as if all objects were become a delightful fairy vision, and the eye had rarefied and refined away the other senses.

The gusto in the Greek statues is of a very singular kind. The sense of perfect form nearly occupies the whole mind, and hardly suffers it to dwell on any other feeling. It seems enough for them *to be*, without acting or suffering. Their forms are ideal, spiritual. Their beauty is power. By their beauty they are raised above the frailties of pain or passion; by their beauty they are deified.

The infinite quantity of dramatic invention in Shakspeare takes from his gusto. The power he delights to show is not intense, but discursive. He never insists on any thing as much as he might, except a quibble. Milton has great gusto. He repeats his blow twice; grapples with and exhausts his subject. His imagination has a double relish of its objects, an inveterate attachment to the things he describes, and to the words describing them.

“ Or where Chineses drive
With sails and wind their *cany* waggons *light*.”

* * * * *

“ Wild above rule or art, *enormous* bliss.”

There is a gusto in Pope's compliments, in Dryden's satires, and Prior's tales ; and, among prose-writers, Boccaccio and Rabelais had the most of it. We will only mention one other work which appears to us to be full of gusto, and that is the *Beggar's Opera*. If it is not, we are altogether mistaken in our notions on this delicate subject.

W. H.



No. XIX.

ON PEDANTRY.

THE power of attaching an interest to the most trifling or painful pursuits, in which our whole attention and faculties are engaged, is one of the greatest happinesses of our nature. The common soldier mounts the breach with joy ; the miser deliberately starves himself to death ; the mathematician sets about extracting the cube-root with a feeling of enthusiasm ; and the lawyer sheds tears of admiration over Coke upon Littleton. It is the same through human life. He who is not in some measure a pedant, though he may be a wise, cannot be a very happy, man.

The chief charm of reading the old novels is from the picture they give of the egotism of the characters, the importance of each individual to himself, and his fancied superiority over every one else. We like, for instance, the pedantry of Parson Adams, who thought a schoolmaster the greatest character in the world, and that he was the greatest schoolmaster in it. We do not see any equivalent for the satisfaction which this conviction must have afforded him in the most nicely graduated scale of talents and accomplishments to which he was an utter stranger. When the old-fashioned Scotch pedagogue turns Roderick Random round and round, and surveys him from head to foot with such infinite surprise and laughter, at the same time breaking out himself into gestures and exclamations still more uncouth and ridiculous, who would wish to have deprived him of this burst of extravagant self-complacency? When our follies afford equal delight to ourselves and those about us, what is there to be desired more? We cannot discover the vast advantage of "seeing ourselves as others see us." It is better to have a contempt for any one than for ourselves!

One of the most constant butts of ridicule, both in the old comedies and novels, is the professional jargon of the medical tribe. Yet it cannot be denied that this jargon, however affected it may seem, is the natural language of apothecaries and physicians, the mother-tongue

of pharmacy ! It is that by which their knowledge first comes to them, that with which they have the most obstinate associations, that in which they can express themselves the most readily and with the best effect upon their hearers ; and though there may be some assumption of superiority in all this, yet it is only by an effort of circumlocution that they could condescend to explain themselves in ordinary language. Besides, there is a delicacy at bottom ; as it is the only language in which a nauseous medicine can be decorously administered, or a limb taken off with the proper degree of secrecy. If the most blundering coxcombs affect this language most, what does it signify, while they retain the same dignified notions of themselves and their art, and are equally happy in their knowledge or their ignorance ? The ignorant and pretending physician is a capital character in Molière : and, indeed, throughout his whole plays, the great source of the comic interest is in the fantastic exaggeration of blind self-love, in letting loose the habitual peculiarities of each individual from all restraint of conscious observation or self-knowledge, in giving way to that specific levity of impulse which mounts at once to the height of absurdity, in spite of the obstacles that surround it, as a fluid in a barometer rises according to the pressure of the external air ! His characters are almost always pedantic, and yet the most unconscious of all others. Take, for ex-

ample, those two worthy gentlemen, Monsieur Jourdain and Monsieur Pourceaugnac.*

Learning and pedantry were formerly synonymous: and it was well when they were so. Can there be a higher satisfaction than for a man to understand Greek, and to believe that there is nothing else worth understanding? Learning is the knowledge of that which is not generally known. What an ease and a dignity in pretensions, founded on the ignorance of others! What a pleasure in wondering, what a pride in being wondered at! In the library of the family where we were brought up, stood the *Fratres Poloni*; and we can never forget or describe the feeling with which not only their appearance, but the names of the authors on the outside, inspired us. Pripsiocvius, we remember, was one of the easiest to pronounce. The gravity of the con-

* A good-natured man will always have a smack of pedantry about him. A lawyer, who talks about law, *certioraris, noli prosequis*, and silk gowns, though he may be a blockhead, is by no means dangerous. It is a very bad sign (unless where it arises from singular modesty) when you cannot tell a man's profession from his conversation. Such persons either feel no interest in what concerns them most, or do not express what they feel. "Not to admire any thing" is a very unsafe rule. A London apprentice, who did not admire the Lord Mayor's coach, would stand a good chance of coming to be hanged. We know but one person absurd enough to have formed his whole character on the above maxim of Horace, and who affects a superiority over others from an uncommon degree of natural and artificial stupidity.

tents seemed in proportion to the weight of the volumes ; the importance of the subjects increased with our ignorance of them. The trivialness of the remarks, if ever we looked into them, the repetitions, the monotony, only gave a greater solemnity to the whole, as the slowness and minuteness of the evidence adds to the impressiveness of a judicial proceeding. We knew that the authors had devoted their whole lives to the production of these works, carefully abstaining from the introduction of any thing amusing, or lively, or interesting. In ten folio volumes there was not one sally of wit, one striking reflection. What then must have been their sense of the importance of the subject, the profound stores of knowledge which they had to communicate ! “ From all this world’s encumbrance they did themselves assoil.” Such was the notion we then had of this learned lumber ; yet we would rather have this feeling again for one half hour than be possessed of all the acuteness of Bayle or the wit of Voltaire !

It may be considered as a sign of the decay of piety and learning, in modern times, that our divines no longer introduce texts of the original Scriptures into their sermons. The very sound of the original Hebrew or Greek would impress the hearer with a more lively faith in the sacred writers than any translation, however literal or correct. It may even be doubted whether the translation of the Scriptures into the vulgar

tongue was any advantage to the people. The mystery in which particular points of faith were left involved, gave an awe and sacredness to religious opinions: the general purport of the truths and promises of revelation was made known by other means; and nothing beyond this general and implicit conviction can be obtained, where all is undefined and infinite.

Again, it may be questioned whether, in matters of mere human reasoning, much has been gained by the disuse of the learned languages. Sir Isaac Newton wrote in Latin; and it is perhaps one of Bacon's fopperies that he translated his works into English. If certain follies have been exposed by being stripped of their formal disguise, others have had a greater chance of succeeding, by being presented in a more pleasing and popular shape. This has been remarkably the case in France (the least pedantic country in the world), where the women mingle with every thing, even with metaphysics, and where all philosophy is reduced to a set of phrases for the toilette. When books are written in the prevailing language of the country, every one becomes a critic who can read. An author is no longer tried by his peers. A species of universal suffrage is introduced in letters, which is only applicable to politics. The good old Latin style of our forefathers, if it concealed the dulness of the writer, at least was a barrier against the impertinence, flippancy, and ignor-

ance of the reader. However, the immediate transition from the pedantic to the popular style in literature was a change that must have been very delightful at the time. Our illustrious predecessors, the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, were very happily off in this respect. They wore the public favour in its newest gloss, before it had become tarnished and common—before familiarity had bred contempt. It was the honey-moon of authorship. Their Essays were among the first instances in this country of learning sacrificing to the graces, and of a mutual understanding and good-humoured equality between the writer and the reader. This new style of composition, to use the phraseology of Mr. Burke, “mitigated authors into companions, and compelled wisdom to submit to the soft collar of social esteem.” The original papers of the *Tatler*, printed on a half sheet of common foolscap, were regularly served up at breakfast-time with the silver tea-kettle and thin slices of bread and butter; and what the ingenious Mr. Bickerstaff wrote over night in his easy chair, he might flatter himself would be read the next morning with elegant applause by the fair, the witty, the learned, and the great, in all parts of this kingdom, in which civilization had made any considerable advances. The perfection of letters is when the highest ambition of the writer is to please his readers, and the greatest pride of the reader is to understand his author.

The satisfaction on both sides ceases when the town becomes a club of authors, when each man stands with his manuscript in his hand waiting for his turn of applause, and when the claims on our admiration are so many that, like those of common beggars, to prevent imposition, they can only be answered with general neglect. Our self-love would be quite bankrupt, if critics by profession did not come forward as beadle^s to keep off the crowd, and to relieve us from the importunity of these innumerable candidates for fame, by pointing out their faults, and passing over their beauties. In the more auspicious period just alluded to, an author was regarded by the better sort as a man of genius,—and by the vulgar, as a kind of prodigy; insomuch that the Spectator was obliged to shorten his residence at his friend Sir Roger de Coverley's from his being taken for a conjuror. Every state of society has its advantages and disadvantages. An author is at present in no danger of being taken for a conjuror!

No. XX.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

LIFE is the art of being well deceived; and, in order that the deception may succeed, it must be habitual and uninterrupted. A constant examina-

tion of the value of our opinions and enjoyments, compared with those of others, may lessen our prejudices, but will leave nothing for our affections to rest upon. A multiplicity of objects unsettles the mind, and destroys not only all enthusiasm, but all sincerity of attachment, all constancy of pursuit; as persons accustomed to an itinerant mode of life never feel themselves at home in any place. It is by means of habit that our intellectual employments mix like our food with the circulation of the blood, and go on like any other part of the animal functions. To take away the force of habit and prejudice entirely is to strike at the root of our personal existence. The book-worm, buried in the depth of his researches, may well say to the obtrusive shifting realities of the world,—“Leave me to my repose!” We have seen an instance of a poetical enthusiast, who would have passed his life very comfortably in the contemplation of *his own idea*, if he had not been disturbed in his reverie by the Reviewers; and, for our own parts, we think we could pass our lives very learnedly and classically in one of the quadrangles at Oxford, without any idea at all, vegetating merely on the air of the place. Chaucer has drawn a beautiful picture of a true scholar in his Clerk of Oxenford:—

“ A Clerk ther was of Oxenforde also,
That unto logike hadde long ygo.
As lene was his horse as is a rake,
And he was not right fat, I undertake ;

But loked holwe, and thereto soberly.
Ful thredbare was his overest courtepy,
For he hadde geten him yet no benefice,
Ne was nought worldly to have an office.
For him was lever han at his beddes hed,
A twenty bokes, clothed in black or red,
Of Aristotle and his philosophie,
Than robes riche, or fidel, or sautrie.
But all be that he was a philosophre,
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre,
But all that he might of his frendes hente,
On bokes and on lerning he it spente,
And besily gan for the soules praie
Of hem, that gave him wherwith to scolaie.
Of studie toke he moste care and hede.
Not a word spake he more then was nede ;
And that was said in forme and reverence,
And short, and quike, and full of high sentence.
Sowning in moral vertue was his speche,
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche."

If letters have profited little by throwing down the barrier between learned prejudice and ignorant presumption, the arts have profited still less by the universal diffusion of accomplishment and pretension. An artist is no longer looked upon as any thing who is not at the same time "chemist, statesman, fiddler, and buffoon." It is expected of him that he should be well-dressed, and he is poor ; that he should move gracefully, and he has never learned to dance ; that he should converse on all subjects, and he understands but one ; that he should be read in different languages, and he only knows his own. Yet there is one language, the

language of Nature, in which it is enough for him to be able to read, to find everlasting employment and solace to his thoughts—

“ Tongues in the trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.”

He will find no end of his labours nor of his triumphs there; yet still feel all his strength not more than equal to the task he has begun—his whole life too short for art. Rubens complained that just as he was beginning to understand his profession he was forced to quit it. It was a saying of Michael Angelo, that “ painting was jealous, and required the whole man to herself.” Is it to be supposed that Rembrandt did not find sufficient resources against the spleen in the little cell, where mystery and silence hung upon his pencil, or the noontide ray penetrated the solemn gloom around him, without the aid of modern newspapers, novels, and reviews? Was he not more wisely employed, while devoted solely to his art—married to that immortal bride! We do not imagine Sir Joshua Reynolds was much happier for having written his lectures, nor for the learned society he kept, friendship apart; and learned society is not necessary to friendship. He was evidently, as far as conversation was concerned, little at his ease in it; and he was always glad, as he himself said, after he had been entertained at the houses of the great, to get back to his painting-room again. Any one settled pursuit, together with the ordinary alter-

nations of leisure, exercise, amusement, and the natural feelings and relations of society, is quite enough to take up the whole of our thoughts, time, and affections ; and any thing beyond this will, generally speaking, only tend to dissipate and distract the mind. There is no end of accomplishments, of the prospect of new acquisitions of taste or skill, or of the uneasiness arising from the want of them, if we once indulge in this idle habit of vanity and affectation. The mind is never satisfied with what it is, but is always looking out for fanciful perfections, which it can neither attain nor practise. Our failure in any one object is fatal to our enjoyment of all the rest ; and the chances of disappointment multiply with the number of our pursuits. In catching at the shadow, we lose the substance. No man can thoroughly master more than one art or science. The world has never seen a perfect painter. What would it have availed for Raphael to have aimed at Titian's colouring, or for Titian to have imitated Raphael's drawing, but to have diverted each from the true bent of his natural genius, and to have made each sensible of his own deficiencies, without any probability of supplying them ? Pedantry in art, in learning, in every thing, is the setting an extraordinary value on that which we can do, and that which we understand best, and which it is our business to do and understand. Where is the harm of this ? To possess or even under-

stand all kinds of excellence equally, is impossible ; and to pretend to admire that to which we are indifferent, as much as that which is of the greatest use, and which gives the greatest pleasure to us, is not liberality, but affectation. Is an artist, for instance, to be required to feel the same admiration for the works of Handel as for those of Raphael ? If he is sincere, he cannot : and a man, to be free from pedantry, must be either a coxcomb or a hypocrite. Vestris was so far in the right, in saying that Voltaire and he were the two greatest men in Europe. Voltaire was so in the public opinion, and he was so in his own. Authors and literary people have been unjustly accused for arrogating an exclusive preference to letters over other arts. They are justified in doing this, because words are the most natural and universal language, and because they have the sympathy of the world with them. Poets, for the same reason, have a right to be the vainest of authors. The prejudice attached to established reputation is, in like manner, perfectly well founded, because that which has longest excited our admiration and the admiration of mankind, is most entitled to admiration, on the score of habit, sympathy, and deference to public opinion. There is a sentiment attached to classical reputation, which cannot belong to new works of genius, till they become old in their turn.

There appears to be a natural division of la-

bour in the ornamental as well as the mechanical arts of human life. We do not see why a nobleman should wish to shine as a poet, any more than to be dubbed a knight, or to be created Lord Mayor of London ! If he succeeds, he gains nothing ; and then if he is damned, what a ridiculous figure he makes ! The great, instead of rivalling them, should keep authors, as they formerly kept fools,—a practice in itself highly laudable, and the disuse of which might be referred to as the first symptom of the degeneracy of modern times, and dissolution of the principles of social order ! But of all the instances of a profession now unjustly obsolete, commend us to the alchemist. We see him sitting fortified in his prejudices, with his furnace, his diagrams, and his alembics ; smiling at disappointments as proofs of the sublimity of his art, and the earnest of his future success : wondering at his own knowledge and the incredulity of others ; fed with hope to the last gasp, and having all the pleasures without the pain of madness. What is there in the discoveries of modern chemistry equal to the very names of the **ELIXIR VITÆ** and the **AURUM POTABILE** !

In *Froissart's Chronicles* there is an account of a reverend Monk, who had been a robber in the early part of his life, and who, when he grew old, used feelingly to lament that he had ever changed his profession. He said, "it was a goodly sight to sally out from his castle, and to

see a troop of jolly friars coming riding that way, with their mules well laden with viands and rich stores, to advance towards them, to attack and overthrow them, returning to the castle with a noble booty." He preferred this mode of life to counting his beads and chaunting his vespers, and repented that he had ever been prevailed on to relinquish so laudable a calling. In this confession of remorse we may be sure that there was no hypocrisy.

The difference in the character of the gentlemen of the present age, and those of the old school, has been often insisted on. The character of a gentleman is a *relative term*, which can hardly subsist where there is no marked distinction of persons. The diffusion of knowledge, of artificial and intellectual equality, tends to level this distinction, and to confound that nice perception, and high sense of honour, which arises from conspicuousness of situation, and a perpetual attention to personal propriety and the claims of personal respect. The age of chivalry is gone with the improvements in the art of war, which superseded the exercise of personal courage ; and the character of a gentleman must disappear with those general refinements in manners, which render the advantages of rank and situation accessible almost to every one. The bag-wig and sword naturally followed the fate of the helmet and the spear, when these outward insignia no longer implied acknow-

ledged superiority, and were a distinction without a difference.

The spirit of chivalrous and romantic love proceeded on the same exclusive principle. It was an enthusiastic adoration, an idolatrous worship paid to sex and beauty. This, even in its blindest excess, was better than the cold indifference and prostituted gallantry of this philosophic age. The extreme tendency of civilization is to dissipate all intellectual energy, and dissolve all moral principle. We are sometimes inclined to regret the innovations on the Catholic religion. It was a noble charter for ignorance, dulness, and prejudice of all kinds, (perhaps, after all, "the sovereign'st things on earth,") and put an effectual stop to the vanity and restlessness of opinion. "It wrapped the human understanding all round like a blanket." Since the Reformation, altars, unsprinkled by holy, oil are no longer sacred; and thrones, unsupported by divine right, have become uneasy and insecure.

W. H.

No. XXI.

MADAME DE STAEL, in her Letters on the Writings and Character of Rousseau, gives it as her opinion, "that the imagination was the

first faculty of his mind, and that this faculty even absorbed all others." * And she further adds, " Rousseau had great strength of reason on abstract questions, or with respect to objects, which have no reality but in the mind." † —Both these opinions are radically wrong. Neither imagination nor reason can properly be said to have been the original predominant faculties of his mind. The strength both of imagination and reason, which he possessed, was borrowed from the excess of another faculty; and the weakness and poverty of reason and imagination, which are to be found in his works, may be traced to the same source, namely, that these faculties in him were artificial, secondary, and dependant, operating by a power not theirs, but lent to them. The only quality which he possessed in an eminent degree, which alone raised him above ordinary men, and which gave to his writings and opinions an influence greater, perhaps, than has been exerted by any individual in modern times, was extreme sensibility, or an acute and even morbid feeling of all that related to his own impressions, to the objects and events of

* "Je crois que l'imagination étoit la première de ses facultés, et qu'elle absorboit même toutes les autres." — p. 80.

† "Il avoit une grande puissance de raison sur les matières abstraites, sur les objets qui n'ont de réalité que dans la pensée," &c., p. 81.

his life. He had the most intense consciousness of his own existence. No object that had once made an impression on him was ever after effaced. Every feeling in his mind became a passion. His craving after excitement was an appetite and a disease. His interest in his own thoughts and feelings was always wound up to the highest pitch; and hence the enthusiasm which he excited in others. He owed the power which he exercised over the opinions of all Europe, by which he created numberless disciples, and overturned established systems, to the tyranny which his feelings, in the first instance, exercised over himself. The dazzling blaze of his reputation was kindled by the same fire that fed upon his vitals.* His ideas differed from those of other men only in their force and intensity. His genius was the effect of his temperament. He created nothing, he demonstrated nothing, by a pure effort of the understanding. His fictitious characters are modifications of his own being, reflections and shadows of himself. His specu-

* He did more towards the French Revolution than any other man. Voltaire, by his wit and penetration, had rendered superstition contemptible, and tyranny odious: but it was Rousseau who brought the feeling of irreconcileable enmity to rank and privileges, *above humanity*, home to the bosom of every man,—identified it with all the pride of intellect, and with the deepest yearnings of the human heart.

lations are the obvious exaggerations of a mind giving a loose to its habitual impulses, and moulding all nature to its own purposes. Hence his enthusiasm and his eloquence, bearing down all opposition. Hence the warmth and the luxuriance, as well as the sameness of his descriptions. Hence the frequent verboseness of his style; for passion lends force and reality to language, and makes words supply the place of imagination. Hence the tenaciousness of his logic, the acuteness of his observations, the refinement and the inconsistency of his reasoning. Hence his keen penetration, and his strange want of comprehension of mind: for the same intense feeling which enabled him to discern the first principles of things, and seize some one view of a subject in all its ramifications, prevented him from admitting the operation of other causes which interfered with his favourite purpose, and involved him in endless wilful contradictions. Hence his excessive egotism, which filled all objects with himself, and would have occupied the universe with his smallest interest. Hence his jealousy and suspicion of others; for no attention, no respect or sympathy, could come up to the extravagant claims of his self-love. Hence his dissatisfaction with himself and with all around him; for nothing could satisfy his ardent longings after good, his restless appetite of being. Hence his feelings, overstrained and

exhausted, recoiled upon themselves, and produced his love of silence and repose, his feverish aspirations after the quiet and solitude of nature. Hence in part also his quarrel with the artificial institutions and distinctions of society, which opposed so many barriers to the unrestrained indulgence of his will, and allured his imagination to scenes of pastoral simplicity or of savage life, where the passions were either not excited or left to follow their own impulse,—where the petty vexations and irritating disappointments of common life had no place,— and where the tormenting pursuits of arts and sciences were lost in pure animal enjoyment, or indolent repose. Thus he describes the first savage wandering for ever under the shade of magnificent forests, or by the side of mighty rivers, smit with the unquenchable love of nature !

The best of all his works is the *Confessions*, though it is that which has been least read, because it contains the fewest set paradoxes or general opinions. It relates entirely to himself ; and no one was ever so much at home on this subject as he was. From the strong hold which they had taken of his mind, he makes us enter into his feelings as if they had been our own, and we seem to remember every incident and circumstance of his life as if it had happened to ourselves. We are never tired of this work, for it every where presents us with pic-

tures which we can fancy to be counterparts of our own existence. The passages of this sort are innumerable. There is the interesting account of his childhood, the constraints and thoughtless liberty of which are so well described ; of his sitting up all night reading romances with his father, till they were forced to desist by hearing the swallows twittering in their nests ; his crossing the Alps, described with all the feelings belonging to it, his pleasure in setting out, his satisfaction in coming to his journey's end, the delight of "coming and going he knew not where ;" his arriving at Turin ; the figure of Madame Basile, drawn with such inimitable precision and elegance ; the delightful adventure of the Chateau de Toune, where he passed the day with Mademoiselle G**** and Mademoiselle Galley ; the story of his Zulietta, the proud, the charming Zulietta, whose last words, *Va Zanetto, e studia la Matematica*, were never to be forgotten ; his sleeping near Lyons in a niche of the wall, after a fine summer's day, with a nightingale perched above his head ; his first meeting with Madame Warens, the pomp of sound with which he has celebrated her name, beginning *Louise Eleonore de Warens etoit une demoiselle de la Tour de Pil, noble et ancienne famille de Vervai, ville du pays de Vaud* (sounds which we still tremble to repeat) ; his description of her person, her angelic smile, her mouth of the size of his own ; his walking

out one day while the bells were chiming to vespers, and anticipating, in a sort of waking dream, the life he afterwards led with her, in which months and years, and life itself passed away in undisturbed felicity ; the sudden disappointment of his hopes ; his transport thirty years after at seeing the same flower which they had brought home together from one of their rambles near Chambery ; his thoughts in that long interval of time ; his suppers with Grimm and Diderot after he came to Paris ; the first idea of his prize dissertation on the savage state ; his account of writing the *New Eloise*, and his attachment to Madame d'Houpetot ; his literary projects, his fame, his misfortunes, his unhappy temper ; his last solitary retirement in the lake and island of Bienne, with his dog and his boat ; his reveries and delicious musings there ; all these crowd into our minds with recollections which we do not choose to express. There are no passages in the *New Eloise* of equal force and beauty with the best descriptions in the *Confessions*, if we except the excursion on the water, Julia's last letter to St. Preux, and his letter to her, recalling the days of their first loves. We spent two whole years in reading these two works ; and (gentle reader, it was when we were young) in shedding tears over them

“ As fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinal gums.”

They were the happiest years of our life. We may well say of them, sweet is the dew of their memory, and pleasant the balm of their recollection ! There are, indeed, impressions which neither time nor circumstances can efface.*

* We shall here give one passage as an example, which has always appeared to us the very perfection of this kind of personal and local description. It is that where he gives an account of his being one of the choristers at the Cathedral at Chambery : " On jugera bien que la vie de la maîtrise toujours chantante et gaie, avec les Musiciens et les Enfans de chœur, me plaisoit plus que celle du Séminaire avec les Peres de S. Lazare. Cependant, cette vie, pour être plus libre, n'en étoit pas moins égale et réglée. J'étois fait pour aimer l'indépendance et pour n'en abuser jamais. Durant six mois entiers, je ne sortis pas une seule fois, que pour aller chez Maman ou à l'Eglise, et je n'en fus pas même tenté. Cette intervalle est un de ceux où j'ai vécu dans le plus grand calme, et que je me suis rappelé avec le plus de plaisir. Dans les situations diverses où je me suis trouvé, quelques uns ont été marqués par un tel sentiment de bien être, qu'en les remémorant j'en suis affecté comme si j'y étois encore. Non seulement je me rappelle les tems, les lieux, les personnes, mais tous les objets environnans, la température de l'air, son odeur, sa couleur, une certaine impression locale qui ne s'est fait sentir que là, et dont le souvenir vif m'y transporte de nouveau. Par exemple, tout ce qu'on répétait à la maîtrise, tout ce qu'on chantoit au chœur, tout ce qu'on y faisoit, le bel et noble habit des Chanoines, les chasubles des Prêtres, les mitres des Chantres, la figure des Musiciens, un vieux Charpentier boiteux qui jouoit de la contrebasse, un petit Abbé blondin qui jouoit du violon, le lambeau de soutanne qu'après avoir posé son épée, M. le *Maître* endossoit par-dessus son habit laïque, et le beau surplis fin dont il en couvrait les loques pour aller au chœur ; l'orgueil avec lequel j'allois, tenant

Rousseau, in all his writings, never once lost sight of himself. He was the same individual from first to last. The spring that moved his passions never went down, the pulse that agitated his heart never ceased to beat. It was this strong feeling of interest, accumulating in his mind, which overpowers and absorbs the feelings of his readers. He owed all his power to sentiment. The writer who most nearly resembles him in our own times is the author of the *Lyrical Ballads*. We see no other difference between them than that the one wrote in prose and the other in poetry; and that prose is perhaps better adapted to express those local and personal feelings, which are inveterate habits in the

ma petite flûte à bec, m'établir dans l'orchestre, à la tribune, pour un petit bout de récit que M. le *Maitre* avait fait exprès pour moi : le bon dîner que nous attendoit ensuite, le bon appétit qu'on y portoit ; ce concours d'objets vivement retracé m'a cent fois charmé dans ma mémoire, autant et plus que dans la réalité. J'ai gardé toujours une affection tendre pour un certain air du *Conditor alme syderum* qui marche par iambes ; parce qu'un Dimanche de l'Avent j'entendis de mon lit chanter cette hymne, avant le jour, sur le perron de la Cathédrale, selon un rite de cette Eglise la. Mlle. *Merceret*, femme-de-chambre de Maman, savoit un peu de musique ; je n'oublierai jamais un petit motet *afferte*, que M. le Maitre me fit chanter avec elle, et que sa maîtresse écoutait avec tant de plaisir. Enfin tout, jusqu'à la bonne servante *Perrine* qui étoit si bonne fille, et que les Enfans de chœur faisoient tant endêver, tout dans les souvenirs de ces tems de bonheur et d'innocence revient souvent me ravir et m'attrister."—*Confessions*, Liv. iii. p. 283.

mind, than poetry, which embodies its imaginary creations. We conceive that Rousseau's exclamation, *Ah, voilà de la pervenche*, comes more home to the mind than Mr. Wordsworth's discovery of the linnet's nest "with five blue eggs," or than his address to the cuckoo, beautiful as we think it is; and we will confidently match the Citizen of Geneva's adventures on the lake of Bienne against the Cumberland Poet's floating dreams on the lake of Grasmere. Both create an interest out of nothing, or rather out of their own feelings; both weave numberless recollections into one sentiment; both wind their own being round whatever object occurs to them. But Rousseau, as a prose-writer, gives only the habitual and personal impression. Mr. Wordsworth, as a poet, is forced to lend the colours of imagination to impressions which owe all their force to their identity with themselves, and tries to paint what is only to be felt. Rousseau, in a word, interests you in certain objects by interesting you in himself: Mr. Wordsworth would persuade you that the most insignificant objects are interesting in themselves, because he is interested in them. If he had met with Rousseau's favourite periwinkle, he would have *translated* it into the most beautiful of flowers. This is not imagination, but want of sense. If his jealousy of the sympathy of others makes him avoid what is beautiful and grand in nature, why does he undertake

elaborately to describe other objects? *His* nature is a mere Dulcinea del Toboso, and he would make a Vashti of her. Rubens appears to have been as extravagantly attached to his three wives as Raphael was to his Fornarina; but their faces were not so classical. The three greatest egoists that we know of, that is, the three writers who felt their own being most powerfully and exclusively, are Rousseau, Wordsworth, and Benvenuto Cellini. As Swift somewhere says, we defy the world to furnish out a fourth.

W. H.

No. XXII.

ON DIFFERENT SORTS OF FAME.

THERE is a half serious, half ironical argument in Melmoth's *Fitz-Osborne's Letters*, to show the futility of posthumous fame, which runs thus:— “The object of any one who is inspired with this passion is to be remembered by posterity with admiration and delight, as having been possessed of certain powers and excellences which distinguished him above his contemporaries. But posterity,” it is said, “can know nothing of the individual but from the memory of these qualities which he has left behind him. All that we know of Julius Cæsar, for instance, is that he was the person who performed certain actions, and wrote a book, called his *Commentaries*.—

When, therefore, we extol Julius Cæsar for his actions or his writings, what do we say but that the person who performed certain things did perform them ; that the author of such a work was the person who wrote it ; or, in short, that Julius Cæsar was Julius Cæsar ? Now, this is a mere truism, and the desire to be the subject of such an identical proposition must, therefore, be an evident absurdity." The sophism is a tolerably ingenious one, but it is a sophism, nevertheless. It would go equally to prove the nullity, not only of posthumous fame, but of living reputation ; for the good or the bad opinion which my next door neighbour may entertain of me is nothing more than his conviction that such and such a person having certain good or bad qualities, is possessed of them ; nor is the figure which a Lord Mayor elect, a prating demagogue, or popular preacher, makes in the eyes of the admiring multitude—*himself*, but an image of him reflected in the minds of others, in connection with certain feelings of respect and wonder. In fact, whether the admiration we seek is to last for a day or for eternity, whether we are to have it while living or after we are dead, whether it is to be expressed by our contemporaries or by future generations, the principle of it is the same—*sympathy with the feelings of others*, and the necessary tendency which the idea or consciousness of the approbation of others has to strengthen the suggestions

of our self-love.* We are all inclined to think well of ourselves, of our sense and capacity in whatever we undertake; but, from this very desire to think well of ourselves, we are (as *Mrs. Peachum* says) "*bitter bad judges*" of our own pretensions; and when our vanity flatters us most, we ought in general to suspect it most. We are, therefore, glad to get the good opinion of a friend, but that may be partial; the good word of a stranger is likely to be more sincere, but he may be a blockhead; the multitude will agree with us, if we agree with them; accident, the caprice of fashion, the prejudice of the moment, may give a fleeting reputation;—our only certain appeal, therefore, is to posterity; the voice of fame is alone the voice of truth. In proportion, however, as this award is final and secure, it is remote and uncertain. Voltaire said to some one, who had addressed an Epistle to Posterity, "I am afraid, my friend, this letter will never be delivered according to its direction." It can exist only in imagination; and we can only presume upon our claim to it, as we prefer the hope of lasting fame to every thing else. The love of fame is almost another name for the love of excellence; or it is the ambition to attain the highest excellence, sanc-

* Burns, when about to sail for America after the first publication of his poems, consoled himself with "the delicious thought of being regarded as a clever fellow, though on the other side of the Atlantic."

tioned by the highest authority, that of time. Vanity, and the love of fame, are quite distinct from each other ; for the one is voracious of the most obvious and doubtful applause, whereas the other rejects or overlooks every kind of applause but that which is purified from every mixture of flattery, and identified with truth and nature itself. There is, therefore, something disinterested in this passion, inasmuch as it is abstracted and ideal, and only appeals to opinion as a standard of truth: it is this which “makes ambition virtue.” Milton had as fine an idea as any one of true fame ; and Dr. Johnson has very beautifully described his patient and confident anticipations of the success of his great poem in the account of *Paradise Lost*. He has, indeed, done the same thing himself in *Lycidas* :—

“Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
 (That last infirmity of noble mind)
 To scorn delights, and live laborious days ;
 But the fair Guerdon when we hope to find,
 And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
 Comes the blind Fury with th’ abhorred shears,
 And slits the thin-spun life. But not the praise,
 Phœbus replied, and touch’d my trembling ears.”

None but those who have sterling pretensions can afford to refer them to time ; as persons who live upon their means cannot well go into Chancery. No feeling can be more at variance with the true love of fame than that impatience which we have sometimes witnessed, to “pluck its fruits, unripe and crude,” before the time,

to make a little echo of popularity mimic the voice of fame, and to convert a prize - medal or a newspaper-puff into a passport to immortality.

When we hear any one complaining that he has not the same fame as some poet or painter who lived two hundred years ago, he seems to us to complain that he has not been dead these two hundred years. When his fame has undergone the same ordeal, that is, has lasted as long, it will be as good, if he really deserves it. We think it equally absurd, when we sometimes find people objecting that such an acquaintance of theirs, who has not an idea in his head, should be so much better off in the world than they are. But it is for this very reason ; they have preferred the indulgence of their ideas to the pursuit of realities. It is but fair that he who has no ideas should have something in their stead. If he who has devoted his time to the study of beauty, to the pursuit of truth, whose object has been to govern opinion, to form the taste of others, to instruct or to amuse the public, succeeds in this respect, he has no more right to complain that he has not a title or a fortune than he who has not purchased a ticket, that is, who has taken no means to the end, has a right to complain that he has not a prize in the lottery.

In proportion as men can command the immediate and vulgar applause of others, they

become indifferent to that which is remote and difficult of attainment. We take pains only when we are compelled to do it. Little men are remarked to have courage ; little women to have wit ; and it is seldom that a man of genius is a coxcomb in his dress. Rich men are contented not to be thought wise ; and the Great often think themselves well off if they can escape being the jest of their acquaintance. Authors were actuated by the desire of the applause of posterity only so long as they were debarred of that of their contemporaries, just as we see the map of the gold mines of Peru hanging in the room of Hogarth's *Distressed Poet*. In the midst of the ignorance and prejudices with which they were surrounded, they had a sort of *forlorn hope* in the prospect of immortality. The spirit of universal criticism has superseded the anticipation of posthumous fame, and, instead of waiting for the award of distant ages, the poet or prose-writer receives his final doom from the next number of the *Edinburgh* or *Quarterly Review*. According as the nearness of the applause increases, our impatience increases with it. A writer in a weekly journal engages with reluctance in a monthly publication : and again, a contributor to a daily paper sets about his task with greater spirit than either of them. It is like prompt payment. The effort and the applause go together. We, indeed, have known a man of genius and eloquence, to whom, from a

habit of excessive talking, the certainty of seeing what he wrote in print the next day was too remote a stimulus for his imagination, and who constantly laid aside his pen in the middle of an article, if a friend dropped in, to finish the subject more effectually aloud, so that the approbation of his hearer, and the sound of his own voice, might be co-instantaneous. Members of Parliament seldom turn authors, except to print their speeches when they have not been distinctly understood; and great orators are generally very indifferent writers, from want of sufficient inducement to exert themselves, when the immediate effect on others is not perceived, and the irritation of applause or opposition ceases.

There have been in the last century two singular examples of literary reputation, the one of an author without a name, and the other of a name without an author. - We mean the author of *Junius's Letters*, and the translator of the mottos to the *Rambler*, whose name was Elphinstone. The *Rambler* was published in the year 1750, and the name of Elphinstone prefixed to each paper is familiar to every literary reader, since that time, though we know nothing more of him. We saw this gentleman, since the commencement of the present century, looking over a clipped hedge in the country, with a broad flapped hat, a venerable countenance, and his dress cut out with the same formality as his ever-greens. His name had not only

survived half a century in conjunction with that of Johnson, but he had survived with it, enjoying all the dignity of a classical reputation, and the ease of a literary sinecure, on the strength of his mottos. The author of *Junius's Letters* is, on the contrary, as remarkable an instance of a writer who has arrived at all the public honours of literature, without being known by name to a single individual, and who may be said to have realized all the pleasure of posthumous fame, while living, without the smallest gratification of personal vanity. An anonymous writer may feel an acute interest in what is said of his productions; and a secret satisfaction in their success, because it is not the effect of personal considerations, as the over-hearing any one speak well of us is more agreeable than a direct compliment. But this very satisfaction will tempt him to communicate his secret. This temptation, however, does not extend beyond the circle of his acquaintance. With respect to the public, who know an author only by his writings, it is of little consequence whether he has a real or a fictitious name, or a signature, so that they have some clue by which to associate the works with the author. In the case of *Junius*, therefore, where other personal considerations of interest or connections might immediately counteract and set aside this temptation, the triumph over the mere vanity of authorship might not have cost him so dear as we are at

first inclined to imagine. Suppose it to have been the old Marquis of ———? It is quite out of the question that he should keep his places and not keep his secret. If ever the King should die, we think it not impossible that the secret may out. Certainly the *accouchement* of any Princess in Europe would not excite an equal interest. "And you, then, Sir, are the author of *Junius*!" What a recognition for the public and the author! That between Yorick and the Frenchman was a trifle to it.

We have said that we think the desire to be known by name as an author chiefly has a reference to those to whom we are known personally, and is strongest with regard to those who know most of our person and least of our capacities. We wish to *subpæna* the public to our characters. Those who, by great services or great meannesses, have attained titles, always take them from the place with which they have the earliest associations, and thus strive to throw a veil of importance over the insignificance of their original pretensions, or the injustice of fortune. When Lord Nelson was passing over the quay at Yarmouth, to take possession of the ship to which he had been appointed, the people exclaimed, "Why make that little fellow a captain?" He thought of this when he fought the battles of the Nile and Trafalgar. The same sense of personal insignificance which made him great in action made him a fool in love. If

Bonaparte had been six inches higher, he never would have gone on that disastrous Russian expedition, nor “with that addition” would he ever have been Emperor and King. For our own parts, one object which we have in writing these Essays is to send them in a volume to a person who took some notice of us when a child, and who augured, perhaps, better of us than we deserved. In fact, the opinion of those who know us most, who are a kind of second self in our recollections, is a sort of second conscience ; and the approbation of one or two friends is all the immortality *we* pretend to !

W. H.

No. XXIII.

CHARACTER OF JOHN BULL.

IN a late number of a respectable publication, there is the following description of the French character :—

“ Extremes meet. This is the only way of accounting for that enigma, the French character. It has often been remarked that this ingenious nation exhibits more striking contradictions than any other that ever existed. They are the gayest of the gay, and gravest of the grave. Their very faces pass at once from an expression of the most lively animation, when

they are in conversation or in action, to a melancholy blank. They are the lightest and most volatile, and, at the same time, the most plodding, mechanical, and laborious, people in Europe. They are one moment the slaves of the most contemptible prejudices, and the next launch out into all the extravagance of the most abstract speculations. In matters of taste they are as inexorable as they are lax in questions of morality: they judge of the one by rules, of the other by their inclinations. It seems at times as if nothing could shock them, and yet they are offended at the merest trifles. The smallest things make the greatest impression on them. From the facility with which they can accommodate themselves to circumstances, they have no fixed principle or real character. They are always that which gives them least pain, or costs them least trouble. They easily disentangle their thoughts from whatever causes the slightest uneasiness, and direct their sensibility to flow in any channels they think proper. Their whole existence is more theatrical than real — their sentiments put on or off like the dress of an actor. Words are with them equivalent to things. They say what is agreeable, and believe what they say. Virtue and vice, good and evil, liberty and slavery, are matters almost of indifference. Their natural self-complacency stands them instead of all other advantages."

The foregoing account is pretty near the

truth ; we have nothing to say against it ; but we shall here endeavour to do a like piece of justice to our countrymen, who are too apt to mistake the vices of others for so many virtues in themselves.

If a Frenchman is pleased with every thing, John Bull is pleased with nothing, and that is a fault. He is, to be sure, fond of having his own way, till you let him have it. He is a very headstrong animal, who mistakes the spirit of contradiction for the love of independence, and proves himself to be in the right by the obstinacy with which he stickles for the wrong. You cannot put him so much out of his way as by agreeing with him. He is never in such good humour as with what gives him the spleen, and is most satisfied when he is sulky. If you find fault with him, he is in a rage ; and if you praise him, suspects you have a design upon him. He recommends himself to another by affronting him, and, if that will not do, knocks him down to convince him of his sincerity. He gives himself such airs as no mortal ever did, and wonders at the rest of the world for not thinking him the most amiable person breathing. John means well too, but he has an odd way of shewing it, by a total disregard of other people's feelings and opinions. He is sincere, for he tells you, at the first word, he does not like you ; and never deceives, for he never offers to serve you. A civil answer is too much to expect

from him. A word costs him more than a blow. He is silent because he has nothing to say, and he looks stupid because he is so. He has the strangest notions of beauty. The expression he values most in the human countenance is an appearance of roast beef and plum pudding ; and if he has a red face and a round belly thinks himself a great man. He is a little purse-proud, and has a better opinion of himself for having made a full meal. But his greatest delight is in a bug-bear. This he must have, be the consequence what it may. Whoever will give him that may lead him by the nose, and pick his pocket at the same time. An idiot in a country town, a Presbyterian parson, a dog with a canister tied to his tail, a bull-bait, or a fox-hunt, are irresistible attractions to him. The Pope was formerly his great aversion, and latterly, a cap of liberty is a thing he cannot abide. He discarded the Pope, and defied the Inquisition, called the French a nation of slaves and beggars, and abused their *Grand Monarque* for a tyrant, cut off one king's head, and exiled another, set up a Dutch Stadholder, and elected a Hanoverian Elector to be king over him, to shew he would have his own way, and to teach the rest of the world what they should do : but since other people took to imitating his example, John has taken it into his head to hinder them, will have a monopoly of rebellion and regicide to himself, has become sworn brother to the Pope, and stands

by the Inquisition, restored his old enemies the Bourbons, and reads *a great moral lesson* to their subjects ; persuades himself that the Dutch Stadtholder and the Hanoverian Elector came to reign over him by divine right, and does all he can to prove himself a beast to make other people slaves. The truth is, John was always a surly, meddlesome, obstinate fellow, and of late years his *head* has not been quite right !— In short, John is a great blockhead and a great bully, and requires (what he has been long labouring for) a hundred years of slavery to bring him to his senses. He will have it he that is a great patriot, for he hates all other countries : that he is wise, for he thinks all other people fools ; that he is honest, for he calls all other people whores and rogues. If being in an ill-humour all one's life is the perfection of human nature, then John is very near it. He beats his wife, quarrels with his neighbours, damns his servants, and gets drunk to kill the time and keep up his spirits, and firmly believes himself the only unexceptionable, accomplished, moral and religious character in Christendom. He boasts of the excellence of the laws, and the goodness of his own disposition ; and yet there are more people hanged in England than in all Europe besides : he boasts of the modesty of his countrywomen, and yet there are more prostitutes in the streets of London than in all the capitals of Europe put together. He piques himself

on his comforts, because he is the most uncomfortable of mortals ; and, because he has no enjoyment in society, seeks it, as he says, at his fireside,—where he may be stupid as a matter of course, sullen as a matter of right, and as ridiculous as he chooses without being laughed at. His liberty is the effect of his self-will ; his religion owing to the spleen ; his temper to the climate. He is an industrious animal, because he has no taste for amusement, and had rather work six days in the week than be idle one. His awkward attempts at gaiety are the jest of other nations. “They,” (the English) says Froissart, speaking of the meeting of the Black Prince and the French King, “amused themselves sadly, according to the custom of their country,”—*se rejoissoient tristement, selon la coutume de leur pays.* Their patience of labour is confined to what is repugnant and disagreeable in itself, to the drudgery of the mechanic arts, and does not extend to the fine arts ; that is, they are indifferent to pain, but insensible to pleasure. They will stand in a trench, or march up to a breach, but they cannot bear to dwell long on an agreeable object. They can no more submit to regularity in art than to decency in behaviour. Their pictures are as coarse and slovenly as their address. John boasts of his great men, without much right to do so ; not that he has not had them, but because he neither knows nor cares any thing about them but to

swagger over other nations. That which chiefly hits John's fancy in Shakspeare is that he was a deer-stealer in his youth ; and as for Newton's discoveries, he hardly knows to this day that the earth is round. John's oaths, which are quite characteristic, have got him the nickname of *Monsieur God damn me.* They are profane, a Frenchman's indecent. One swears by his vices, the other by their punishment. After all John's blustering, he is but a dolt. His habitual jealousy of others makes him the inevitable dupe of quacks and impostors of all sorts ; he goes all lengths with one party out of spite to another ; his zeal is as furious as his antipathies are unfounded ; and there is nothing half so absurd or ignorant of its own intentions as an English mob.

W. H.



No. XXIV.

ON GOOD NATURE.

LORD SHAFTESBURY somewhere remarks that a great many people pass for very good-natured persons, for no other reason than because they care about nobody but themselves ; and, consequently, as nothing annoys them but what touches their own interest, they never irritate themselves unnecessarily about what does not

concern them, and seem to be made of the very milk of human kindness.

Good-nature, or what is often considered as such, is the most selfish of all the virtues: it is nine times out of ten mere indolence of disposition. A good-natured man is, generally speaking, one who does not like to be put out of his way; and, as long as he can help it, that is, till the provocation comes home to himself, he will not. He does not create fictitious uneasiness out of the distresses of others; he does not fret and fume, and make himself uncomfortable about things he cannot mend, and that no way concern him, even if he could: but then there is no one who is more apt to be disconcerted by what puts him to any personal inconvenience, however trifling; who is more tenacious of his selfish indulgences, however unreasonable; or who resents more violently any interruption of his ease and comforts, the very trouble he is put to in resenting it being felt as an aggravation of the injury. A person of this character feels no emotions of anger or detestation, if you tell him of the devastation of a province, or the massacre of the inhabitants of a town, or the enslaving of a people; but if his dinner is spoiled by a lump of soot falling down the chimney, he is thrown into the utmost confusion, and can hardly recover a decent command of his temper for the whole day. He thinks nothing can go amiss, so long as he is at his ease, though a pain in his

little finger makes him so peevish and quarrelsome that nobody can come near him. Knavery and injustice in the abstract are things that by no means ruffle his temper, or alter the serenity of his countenance, unless he is to be the sufferer by them; nor is he ever betrayed into a passion in answering a sophism, if he does not think it immediately directed against his own interest.

On the contrary, we sometimes meet with persons who regularly heat themselves in an argument, and get out of humour on every occasion, and make themselves obnoxious to a whole company, about nothing. This is not because they are ill-tempered, but because they are in earnest. Good-nature is a hypocrite: it tries to pass off its love of its own ease and indifference to every thing else for a particular softness and mildness of disposition. All people get in a passion, and lose their temper, if you offer to strike them, or cheat them of their money, that is, if you interfere with that which they are really interested in. Tread on the heel of one of these good-natured persons, who do not care if the whole world is in flames, and see how he will bear it. If the truth were known, the most disagreeable people are the most amiable. They are the only persons who feel an interest in what does not concern them.—They have as much regard for others as they have for themselves. They have as many vexa-

tions and causes of complaint as there are in the world. They are general righters of wrongs, and redressers of grievances. They not only are annoyed by what they can help, by an act of inhumanity done in the next street, or in a neighbouring country by their own countrymen, they not only do not claim any share in the glory, and hate it the more, the more brilliant the success,—but a piece of injustice done three thousand years ago touches them to the quick. They have an unfortunate attachment to a set of abstract phrases, such as *liberty, truth, justice, humanity, honour*, which are continually abused by knaves, and misunderstood by fools, and they can hardly contain themselves for spleen. They have something to keep them in perpetual hot-water. No sooner is one question set at rest than another rises up to perplex them. They wear themselves to the bone in the affairs of other people, to whom they can do no manner of service, to the neglect of their own business and pleasure. They tease themselves to death about the morality of the Turks, or the politics of the French. There are certain words that afflict their ears, and things that lacerate their souls, and remain a plague-spot there for ever after. They have a fellow-feeling with all that has been done, said, or thought in the world. They have an interest in all science and in all art. They hate a lie as much as a wrong, for truth is the foundation of all justice. Truth

is the first thing in their thoughts, then mankind, then their country, last themselves. They love excellence, and bow to fame, which is the shadow of it. Above all, they are anxious to see justice done to the dead, as the best encouragement to the living, and the lasting inheritance of future generations. They do not like to see a great principle undermined, or the fall of a great man. They would sooner forgive a blow in the face than a wanton attack on acknowledged reputation. The contempt in which the French hold Shakspeare is a serious evil to them; nor do they think the matter mended when they hear an Englishman, who would be thought a profound one, say that Voltaire was a man without wit. They are vexed to see genius playing at Tom Fool, and honesty turned hawd. It gives them a cutting sensation to see a number of things which, as they are unpleasant to see, we shall not here repeat. In short, they have a passion for truth; they feel the same attachment to the idea of what is right that a knave does to his interest, or that a good-natured man does to his ease; and they have as many sources of uneasiness as there are actual or supposed deviations from this standard in the sum of things, or as there is a possibility of folly and mischief in the world.

Principle is a passion for truth; an incorrigible attachment to a general proposition. Good-nature is humanity that costs nothing. No good-

natured man was ever a martyr to a cause, in religion or politics. He has no idea of striving against the stream. He may become a good courtier and a loyal subject ; and it is hard if he does not, for he has nothing to do in that case but to consult his ease, interest, and outward appearances. The Vicar of Bray was a good-natured man. What a pity he was but a vicar ! A good - natured man is utterly unfit for any situation or office in life that requires integrity, fortitude, or generosity,—any sacrifice, except of opinion, or any exertion, but to please. A good-natured man will debauch his friend's mistress, if he has an opportunity ; and betray his friend, sooner than share disgrace or danger with him. He will not forego the smallest gratification to save the whole world. He makes his own convenience the standard of right and wrong. He avoids the feeling of pain in himself, and shuts his eyes to the sufferings of others. He will put a malefactor or an innocent person (no matter which) to the rack, and only laugh at the uncouthness of the gestures, or wonder that he is so unmannerly as to cry out. There is no villainy to which he will not lend a helping hand with great coolness and cordiality, for he sees only the pleasant and profitable side of things. He will assent to a falsehood with a leer of complacency, and applaud any atrocity that comes recommended in the garb of authority. He will betray his country to please a

Minister, and sign the death-warrant of thousands of wretches, rather than forfeit the congenial smile, the well-known squeeze of the hand. The shrieks of death, the torture of mangled limbs, the last groans of despair, are things that shock his smooth humanity too much ever to make an impression on it: his good-nature sympathizes only with the smile, the bow, the gracious salutation, the fawning answer: vice loses its sting, and corruption its poison, in the oily gentleness of his disposition. He will not hear of any thing wrong in Church or State. He will defend every abuse by which any thing is to be got, every dirty job, every act of every Minister. In an extreme case, a very good-natured man indeed may try to hang twelve honester men than himself to rise at the Bar, and forge the seal of the realm to continue his colleagues a week longer in office. He is a slave to the will of others, a coward to their prejudices, a tool of their vices. A good-natured man is no more fit to be trusted in public affairs than a coward or a woman is to lead an army. Spleen is the soul of patriotism and of public good. Lord Castlereagh is a good-natured man, Lord Eldon is a good-natured man, Charles Fox was a good-natured man. The last instance is the most decisive. The definition of a true patriot is *a good hater*.

A king, who is a good-natured man, is in a fair way of being a great tyrant. A king ought

to feel concern for all to whom his power extends ; but a good-natured man cares only about himself. If he has a good appetite, eats and sleeps well, nothing in the universe besides can disturb him. The destruction of the lives or liberties of his subjects will not stop him in the least of his caprices, but will concoct well with his bile, and "good digestion wait on appetite, and health on both." He will send out his mandate to kill and destroy with the same indifference or satisfaction that he performs any natural function of his body. The consequences are placed beyond the reach of his imagination, or would not affect him if they were not, for he is a fool, and good-natured. A good-natured man hates more than any one else whatever thwarts his will, or contradicts his prejudices ; and, if he has the power to prevent it, depend upon it, he will use it without remorse and without control.

There is a lower species of this character, which is what is usually understood by a *well-meaning man*. A well-meaning man is one who often does a great deal of mischief without any kind of malice. He means no one any harm, if it is not for his interest. He is not a knave, nor perfectly honest. He does not easily resign a good place. Mr. Vansittart is a well-meaning man.

The Irish are a good-natured people ; they have many virtues, but their virtues are those of the heart, not of the head. In their passions

and affections they are sincere, but they are hypocrites in understanding. If they once begin to calculate the consequences, self-interest prevails. An Irishman who trusts to his principles, and a Scotchman who yields to his impulses, are equally dangerous.—The Irish have wit, genius, eloquence, imagination, affections: but they want coherence of understanding, and consequently have no standard of thought or action. Their strength of mind does not keep pace with the warmth of their feelings, or the quickness of their conceptions. Their animal spirits run away with them: their reason is a jade. There is something crude, indigested, rash, and discordant, in almost all that they do or say. They have no system, no abstract ideas. They are “every thing by starts, and nothing long.” They are a wild people. They hate whatever imposes a law on their understandings, or a yoke on their wills. To betray the principles they are most bound by their own professions and the expectations of others to maintain, is with them a reclamation of their original rights; and to fly in the face of their benefactors and friends, an assertion of their natural freedom of will. They want consistency and good faith. They unite fierceness with levity. In the midst of their headlong impulses, they have an under-current of selfishness and cunning, which in the end gets the better of them. Their feelings, when no longer excited by novelty or opposition, grow

cold and stagnant. Their blood, if not heated by passion, turns to poison. They have a rancour in their hatred of any object they have abandoned proportioned to the attachment they have professed to it. Their zeal, converted against itself, is furious. The late Mr. Burke was an instance of an Irish patriot and philosopher. He abused metaphysics, because he could make nothing out of them, and turned his back upon liberty, when he found he could get nothing more by her.*—See to the same purpose

* This man (Burke) who was a half poet and a half philosopher, has done more mischief than perhaps any other person in the world. His understanding was not competent to the discovery of any truth, but it was sufficient to palliate a falsehood ; his reasons, of little weight in themselves, thrown into the scale of power, were dreadful. Without genius to adorn the beautiful, he had the art to throw a dazzling veil over the deformed and disgusting ; and to strew the flowers of imagination over the rotten carcass of corruption, not to prevent, but to communicate, the infection. His jealousy of Rousseau was one chief cause of his opposition to the French Revolution. The writings of the one had changed the institutions of a kingdom ; while the speeches of the other, with the intrigues of his whole party, had changed nothing but the *turnspit of the King's kitchen*. He would have blotted out the broad pure light of Heaven, because it did not first shine in at the little Gothic windows of St. Stephen's chapel. The genius of Rousseau had levelled the towers of the Bastille with the dust ; our zealous reformist, who would rather be doing mischief than nothing, tried, therefore, to patch them up again, by calling that loathsome dungeon the King's castle, and by fulsome adulation of the virtues of a Court strumpet. This man,—but enough of him here.

the winding up of the character of *Judy* in Miss Edgeworth's *Castle Rack-rent*.

W. H.



No. XXV.

A DAY BY THE FIRE.

I AM one of those that delight in a fireside, and can enjoy it without even the help of a cat or a tea-kettle. To cats, indeed, I have an aversion, as animals that only affect a sociality, without caring a jot for any thing but their own luxury ; and my tea-kettle,—I frankly confess,—has long been displaced, or rather dismissed, by a bronze-coloured and graceful urn ; though, between ourselves, I am not sure that I have gained any thing by the exchange. Cowper, it is true, talks of the “ bubbling and loud-hissing urn,” which

“Throws up a steamy column ;”

but there was something so primitive and unaffected,—so warm-hearted and unpresuming, in the tea-kettle,—its song was so much more cheerful and continued,—and it kept the water so hot and comfortable as long as you wanted it,—that I sometimes feel as if I had sent off a good, plain, faithful old friend, who had but one wish to serve me, for a superficial, smooth-faced upstart of a fellow, who, after a little promising

and vapouring, grows cold and contemptuous, and thinks himself bound to do nothing but stand on a rug and have his person admired by the circle. To this admiration, in fact, I have been obliged to resort, in order to make myself think well of my bargain, if possible; and, accordingly, I say to myself every now and then during the tea,—“A pretty look with it—that urn;” or, “It’s wonderful what a taste the Greeks had;” or, “The eye might have a great many enjoyments, if people would but look after forms and shapes.” In the meanwhile, the urn leaves off its “bubbling and hissing;”—but then there is such an air with it! My tea is made of cold water,—but then—the Greeks were such a nation!

If there is any one thing that can reconcile me to the loss of my kettle, more than another, it is that my fire has been left to itself: it has full room to breathe and to blaze, and I can poke it as I please. What recollections does that idea excite!—Poke it as I please!—Think, benevolent Reader,—think of the pride and pleasure of having in your hand that awful, but, at the same time, artless weapon, a poker,—of putting it into the proper bar,—gently levering up the coals,—and seeing the instant and bustling flame above! To what can I compare that moment? That sudden, empyreal enthusiasm? That fiery expression of vivification? That ardent acknowledgment, as it were, of the care

and kindness of the operator? Let me consider a moment:—it is very odd;—I was always reckoned a lively hand at a simile;—but language and combination absolutely fail me here. If it is like any thing, it must be something beyond every thing in beauty and life. Oh—I have it now:—think, Reader,—if you are one of those who can muster up sufficient sprightliness to engage in a game of forfeits,—on Twelfth night, for instance,—think of a blooming girl, who is condemned to “open her mouth and shut her eyes, and see what Heaven,” in the shape of a mischievous young fellow, “will send her.” Her mouth is opened accordingly, the fire of her eyes is dead, her face assumes a doleful air;—up walks the aforesaid Heaven or mischievous young fellow (young Ouranos,—Hesiod would have called him), and, instead of a piece of paper, a thimble, or a cinder, claps into her mouth a peg of orange or a long slice of citron;—then her eyes above instantly light up again,—the smiles wreath about,—the sparklings burst forth, and all is warmth, brilliancy, and delight.—I am aware that this simile is not perfect; but if it would do for an epic poem, as I think it might, after Virgil’s whipping-tops and Homer’s jack-asses and black-puddings, the reader, perhaps, will not quarrel with it.

But to describe my feelings in an orderly manner, I must request the reader to go with

me through a day's enjoyments by the fireside. It is part of my business to look about for helps to reflection ; and, for this reason, among many others, I indulge myself in keeping a good fire from morning till night. I have also a reflective turn for an easy chair, and a very thinking attachment to comfort in general. But of this, as I proceed.—Imprimis, then,—the morning is clear and cold,—time, half-past seven,—scene, a breakfast-room. Some persons, by the bye, prefer a thick and rainy morning, with a sobbing wind, and the clatter of pattens along the streets ; but, I confess, for my own part, that being a sedentary person, and too apt to sin against the duties of exercise, I have somewhat too sensitive a consciousness of bad weather, and feel a heavy sky go over me like a feather-bed, or rather like a huge brush which rubs all my knap the wrong way. I am growing better in this respect, and, by the help of a stout walk at noon, and getting, as it were, fairly into a favourite poet and a warm fire of an evening, begin to manage a cloud or an east wind tolerably well :—but still, for perfection's sake on the present occasion, I must insist upon my clear morning, and will add to it, if the reader pleases, a little hoar-frost upon the windows, a bird or two coming after the crumbs, and the light smoke from the neighbouring chimneys brightening up into the early sunshine. Even the dustman's bell is not unpleasant from its

association ; and there is something absolutely musical in the clash of the milk-pails suddenly unyoked, and the ineffable, *ad libitum* note that follows.

The waking epicure rises with an elastic anticipation; enjoys the freshening cold-water which endears what is to come; and even goes placidly through the villainous scraping process which we soften down into the level and lawny appellation of shaving. He then hurries down stairs, rubbing his hands, and sawing the sharp air through his teeth ; and, as he enters the breakfast-room, sees his old companion glowing through the bars, the life of the apartment, and wanting only his friendly hand to be lightened a little, and enabled to shoot up into dancing brilliancy. (I find I am getting into a quantity of epithets here ; and must rein in my enthusiasm.) — What need I say ? The poker is applied, and would be so whether required or not, for it is impossible to resist the sudden ardour inspired by that sight : — the use of the poker, on first seeing one's fire, is as natural as shaking hands with a friend. At that movement a hundred little sparkles fly up from the coal-dust that falls within, while from the masses themselves, a roaring flame mounts aloft with a deep and fitful sound as of a shaken carpet :—epithets again ;—I must recur to poetry at once :—

Then shine the bars, the cakes in smoke aspire,
A sudden glory bursts from all the fire.

The conscious wight, rejoicing in the heat,
Rubs the blithe knees, and toasts th' alternate feet.*

The utility, as well as beauty, of the fire *during* breakfast, need not be pointed out to the most unphlogistic observer. A person would rather be shivering at any time of the day than at that of his first rising:—the transition would be too unnatural:—he is not prepared for it,—as Barnardine says, when he objects to being hanged. If you eat plain bread and butter with your tea, it is fit that your moderation should be rewarded with a good blaze; and if you indulge in hot rolls or toast, you will hardly keep them to their warmth without it, particularly if you read; and then,—if you take in a newspaper,—what a delightful change from the wet, raw, dabbing fold of paper, when you first touch it, to the dry, crackling, crisp superficies which, with a skilful spat of the finger-nails at its upper end, stands at once in your hand, and looks as if it said, “Come read me.” Nor is it the look of the newspaper only which the fire must render complete:—it is the interest of the ladies who may happen to form part of your family,—of your wife in particular, if you have one,—to avoid the niggling and pinching aspect of cold; it

* Parody upon part of the well-known description of night, with which Pope has swelled out the passage in Homer, and the faults of which have long been appreciated by general readers.

takes away the harmony of her features, and the graces of her behaviour ; while, on the other hand, there is scarcely a more interesting sight in the world than that of a neat, delicate, good-humoured female, presiding at your breakfast-table, with hands tapering out of her long sleeves, eyes with a touch of Sir Peter Lely in them, and a face set in a little oval frame of muslin tied under the chin, and retaining a certain tinge of the pillow without its cloudiness. This is, indeed, the finishing grace of a fireside, though it is impossible to have it at all times, and perhaps not always politic,—especially for the studious.

From breakfast to dinner, the quantity and quality of enjoyment depends very much on the nature of one's concerns ; and occupation of any kind, if we pursue it properly, will hinder us from paying a critical attention to the fireside. It is sufficient, if our employments do not take us away from it, or at least from the genial warmth of a room which it adorns ;—unless, indeed, we are enabled to have recourse to exercise ; and in that case, I am not so unjust as to deny that walking or riding has its merits, and that the general glow they diffuse throughout the frame has something in it so extremely pleasurable and encouraging ;—nay, I must not scruple to confess that, without some preparation of this kind, the enjoyment of the fireside, humanly speaking, is not absolutely perfect ; as I have latterly been convinced by a variety of

incontestable arguments in the shape of headaches, rheumatisms, mote - haunted eyes, and other logical appeals to one's feelings which are in great use with physicians.—Supposing, therefore, the morning to be passed, and the due portion of exercise to have been taken, the Firesider fixes rather an early hour for dinner, particularly in the winter-time; for he has not only been early at breakfast, but there are two luxurious intervals to enjoy between dinner and the time of candles,— one that supposes a party round the fire with their wine and fruit,—the other, the hour of twilight, of which it has been reasonably doubted whether it is not the most luxurious point of time which a fireside can present:—but opinions will naturally be divided on this as on all other subjects, and every degree of pleasure depends upon so many contingencies, and upon such a variety of associations, induced by habit and opinion, that I should be as unwilling as I am unable to decide on the matter. This, however, is certain, that no true Firesider can dislike an hour so composing to his thoughts, and so cherishing to his whole faculties; and it is equally certain that he will be little inclined to protract the dinner beyond what he can help, for if ever a fireside becomes unpleasant, it is during that gross and pernicious prolongation of eating and drinking, to which this latter age has given itself up, and which threatens to make the rising generation regard

a meal of repletion as the ultimatum of enjoyment.

The inconvenience to which I allude is owing to the way in which we sit at dinner, for the persons who have their backs to the fire are liable to be scorched, while, at the same time, they render the persons opposite them liable to be frozen ; so that the fire becomes uncomfortable to the former, and tantalizing to the latter ; and thus three evils are produced, of a most absurd and scandalous nature :—in the first place, the fireside loses a degree of its character, and awakens feelings the very reverse of what it should ; secondly, the position of the back towards it is a neglect and affront, which it becomes it to resent ; and finally, its beauties, its proffered kindness, and its sprightly social effect, are at once cut off from the company by the interposition of those invidious and idle surfaces called screens. This abuse is the more ridiculous, inasmuch as the remedy is so easy ; for we have nothing to do but to use semicircular dining-tables, with the base unoccupied towards the fire-place, and the whole annoyance vanishes at once ; the master or mistress might preside in the middle, as was the custom with the Romans, and thus propriety would be observed, while every body had the sight and benefit of the fire ;—not to mention that, by this fashion, the table might be brought nearer to it,—that the servants would have better access to the

dishes,—and that screens, if at all necessary, might be turned to better purpose as a general enclosure instead of a separation.

But I hasten from dinner, according to notice; and cannot but observe that, if you have a small set of visitors, who enter into your feelings on this head, there is no movement so pleasant as a general one from the table to the fireside, each person taking his glass with him, and a small, slim-legged table being introduced into the circle for the purpose of holding the wine, and perhaps a poet or two, a glee-book, or a lute. If this practice should become general among those who know how to enjoy luxuries in such temperance as not to destroy conversation, it would soon gain for us another social advantage, by putting an end to the barbarous custom of sending away the ladies after dinner,—a gross violation of those chivalrous graces of life, for which modern times are so highly indebted to the persons whom they are pleased to term Gothic. And here I might digress, with no great impropriety, to show the *snug* notions that were entertained by the knights and damsels of old in all particulars relating to domestic enjoyment, especially in the article of mixed company;—but I must not quit the fireside, and will only observe that, as the ladies formed its chief ornament, so they constituted its most familiar delight.

“ The minstralcie, the service at the feste,
The grete yeftes to the most and leste,
The riche array of Theseus’ paleis,
Ne who sate first, ne last upon the deis,
What ladies fairest ben, or best dancing,
Or which of hem can carole best or sing,
Ne who most felingly speketh of love ;
What haukis sitten on the perch above,
What houndis liggen on the flour adoun,—
Of all this now make I no menciouun.”

CHAUCER.



No. XXVI.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

THE word *snug*, however, reminds me that, amidst all the languages, ancient and modern, it belongs exclusively to our own; and that nothing but a want of ideas suggested by that soul-wrapping epithet could have induced certain frigid connoisseurs to tax our climate with want of genius,—supposing, forsooth, that, because we have not the sunshine of the Southern countries, we have no other warmth for our veins, and that, because our skies are not hot enough to keep us in doors, we have no excur-siveness of wit and range of imagination. It seems to me that a great deal of good argument in refutation of these calumnies has been wasted upon Monsieur du Bos and the Herr Winckelman,— the one a narrow-minded, pedantic

Frenchman, to whom the freedom of our genius was incomprehensible,—the other an Italianized German, who being suddenly transported into the sunshine, began frisking about with unwieldy vivacity, and concluded that nobody could be great or bewitching out of the pale of his advantages. Milton, it is true, in his *Paradise Lost*, expresses an injudicious apprehension lest

“ An age too late, or cold
Climate, or years, damp his intended wing ;”

but the very complaint which foreign critics bring against him, as well as Shakspeare, is that his wing was not damped enough,—that it was too daring and unsubdued; and he not only avenges himself nobly of his fears by a flight beyond all Italian poetry, but shows, like the rest of his countrymen, that he could turn the coldness of his climate into a new species of inspiration, as I shall presently make manifest. Not to mention, however, that the Greeks and Romans, Homer in particular, saw a great deal worse weather than these critics would have us imagine, the question is, would the Poets themselves have thought as they did? Would Tyrtaeus, the singer of patriotism, have complained of being an Englishman? Would Virgil, who delighted in husbandry, and whose first wish was to be a philosopher, have complained of living in our pastures, and being the countryman

of Newton? Would Homer, the observer of character, the panegyrist of freedom, the painter of storms, of landscapes, and of domestic tenderness,—aye, and the lover of snug house-room and a good dinner,—would he have complained of our humours, of our liberty, of our shifting skies, of our ever-green fields, our conjugal happiness, our firesides, and our hospitality? I only wish the reader and I had him at this party of ours after dinner, with a lyre on his knee, and a goblet, as he says, to drink as he pleased,—

—“Piein, hote thumos anogoi.”
Odyss. lib. viii. v. 70.

I am much mistaken if our blazing fire and our freedom of speech would not give him a warmer inspiration than ever he felt in the person of Demodocus, even though placed on a lofty seat, and regaled with slices of brawn from a prince's table. The ancients, in fact, were by no means deficient in enthusiasm at sight of a good fire; and it is to be presumed that, if they had enjoyed such firesides as ours, they would have acknowledged the advantages which our genius presents in winter, and almost been ready to conclude, with old Cleveland, that the sun himself was nothing but

“Heaven's coalery;—
A coal-pit rampant, or a mine on flame.”

The ancient hearth was generally in the middle of the room, the ceiling of which let out the

smoke ; it was supplied with charcoal or fagots ; and consisted sometimes of a brazier or chafing-dish (the *focus* of the Romans), sometimes of a mere elevation or altar (the *εἴσια* or *εὐχαρά* of the Greeks). We may easily imagine the smoke and annoyance which this custom must have occasioned,—not to mention the bad complexions which are caught by hanging over a fuming pan, as the faces of the Spanish ladies bear melancholy witness. The stoves, however, in use with the countrymen of Mons. du Bos and Winckelman are, if possible, still worse, having a dull, suffocating effect, with nothing to recompense the eye. The abhorrence of them which Ariosto expresses in one of his satires, when, justifying his refusal to accompany Cardinal d'Este into Germany, he reckons up the miseries of its winter-time, may have led M. Winckelman to conclude that all the Northern resources against cold were equally intolerable to an Italian genius ; but Count Alfieri, a poet, at least as warmly inclined as Ariosto, delighted in England ; and the great Romancer himself, in another of his satires, makes a commodious fireplace the climax of his wishes with regard to lodging. In short, what did Horace say, or rather what did he not say, of the raptures of in-door sociality—Horace, who knew how to enjoy sunshine in all its luxury, and who nevertheless appears to have snatched a finer inspiration from absolute frost and snow ? I need not

quote all those beautiful little invitations he sent to his acquaintances, telling one of them that a neat room and a sparkling fire were waiting for him, describing to another the smoke springing out of the roof in curling volumes, and even congratulating his friends in general on the opportunity of enjoyment afforded them by a stormy day ; but, to take leave at once of these frigid connoisseurs, hear with what rapture he describes one of those friendly parties, in which he passed his winter evenings, and which only wanted the finish of our better morality and our patent fireplaces, to resemble the one I am now fancying.

“ *Vides, ut altâ stet nive candidum
 Soracte, nec jam sustineant onus
 Silvæ laborantes, geluque
 Flumina constiterint acuto :*

*Dissolve frigus ligna super foco
 Largè reponens, atque benigniùs
 Deprome quadrum Sabinâ,
 O Thaliarche, merum diotâ.*

Permitte Divis cætera ;

*Donec virenti canities abest
 Morosa. Nunc et campus, et areæ,
 Lenesque sub noctem susurri
 Compositâ repetantur horâ ;*

*Nunc et latentis proditor intimo
 Gratus puellæ risus ab angulo,
 Pignusque dereptum lacertis
 Aut digito male pertinaci.”*

Lib. I. Od. 9.

“ Behold yon mountain’s hoary height
Made higher with new mounts of snow ;
Again behold the winter’s weight
Oppress the lab’ring woods below,
And streams with icy fetters bound
Benumb’d and cramp’t to solid ground.

With well-heap’d logs dissolve the cold,
And feed the genial hearth with fires,
Produce the wine that makes us bold,
And sprightly wit and mirth inspires.
For what hereafter shall betide,
Jove, if ‘tis worth his care, provide.

* * * *

Th’ appointed hour of promis’d bliss,
The pleasing whisper in the dark,
The half unwilling, willing kiss,
The laugh that guides thee to the mark,
When the kind nymph would coyness feign,
And hides but to be found again,
These, these are joys the gods for youth ordain.”

DRYDEN.

The Roman poet, however, though he occasionally boasts of his temperance, is too apt to lose sight of the intellectual part of his entertainment, or at least to make the sensual part predominate over the intellectual. Now, I reckon the nicety of social enjoyment to consist in the reverse ; and, after partaking with Homer of his plentiful boiled and roast, and with Horace of his flower-crowned wine parties, the poetical reader must come at last to us Barbarians of the North for the perfection of fireside festivity—that is to say, for the union of practical philosophy with absolute merriment,—for light meals

and unintoxicating glasses,—for refection that administers to enjoyment, instead of repletions that at once constitute and contradict it. I am speaking, of course, not of our common-place eaters and drinkers, but of our classical arbiters of pleasure, as contrasted with those of other countries ; these, it is observable, have all delighted in Horace, and copied him as far as their tastes were congenial ; but, without relaxing a jot of their real comfort, how pleasingly does their native philosophy temper and adorn the freedom of their conviviality,—feeding the fire, as it were, with an equable fuel that hinders it alike from scorching and from going out, and, instead of the artificial enthusiasm of a heated body, enabling them to enjoy the healthful and unclouded predominance of a sparkling intelligence ! It is curious, indeed, to see how distinct from all excess are their freest and heartiest notions of relaxation. Thus, our old poet Drayton, reminding his favourite companion of a fireside meeting, expressly unites freedom with moderation :—

“ My dearly loved friend, how oft have we
In winter evenings, meaning to be free,
To some well-chosen place us’d to retire,
And there with moderate meat, and wine, and fire,
Have pass’d the hours contentedly in chat,
Now talk’d of this, and then discours’d of that,—
Spoke our own verses ‘twixt ourselves,—if not
Other men’s lines, which we by chance had got.”

Epistle to Henry Reynolds, Esq., of Poets and Poesy

And Milton, in his Sonnet to Cyriack Skinner, one of the turns of which is plainly imitated from Horace, particularly qualifies a strong invitation to merriment by anticipating what Horace would always drive from your reflections,—the feelings of the day after:—

“Cyriack, whose Grandsire, on the royal bench
Of British Themis, with no mean applause
Pronounc'd, and in his volumes taught, our laws,
Which others at their bar so often wrench ;
To-day deep thoughts resolve with me to drench
In mirth, that, after, no repenting draws.
Let Euclid rest, and Archimedes pause,
And what the Swede intends, and what the French.
To measure life learn thou betimes, and know
Tow'rd solid good what leads the nearest way :
For other things mild Heav'n a time ordains,
And disapproves that care, though wise in shew,
That with superfluous burden loads the day,
And when God sends a cheerful hour, refrains.”

But the execution of this sonnet is not to be compared in gracefulness and a finished sociality with the one addressed to his friend Lawrence, which, as it presents us with the acme of elegant repast, may conclude the hour which I have just been describing, and conduct us complacently to our twilight.

“Lawrence, of virtuous father virtuous son,
Now that the fields are dank, and ways are mire,
Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire
Help waste a sullen day,—what may be won
From the hard season gaining ? Time will run
On smoother, till Favonius re-inspire
The frozen earth, and clothe in fresh attire
The lily and rose, that neither sow'd nor spun.

What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice,
Of Attic taste, with wine, whence we may rise
To hear the lute well-touch'd, and artful voice
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?
He who of these delights can judge, and spare
To interpose them oft, is not unwise."

But twilight comes ; and the lover of the fire-side, for the perfection of the moment, is now alone. He was reading a minute or two ago, and for some time was unconscious of the increasing dusk, till, on looking up, he perceived the objects out of doors deepening into massy outline, while the sides of his fireplace began to reflect the light of the flames, and the shadow of himself and his chair fidgeted with huge obscurity on the wall. Still wishing to read, he pushed himself nearer and nearer the window, and continued fixing on his book, till he happened to take another glance out of doors, and on returning to it, could make out nothing. He therefore lays it aside, and restoring his chair to the fireplace, seats himself right before it in a reclining posture, his feet apart upon the fender, his eyes bent down towards the grate, his arms on the chair's elbows, one hand hanging down, and the palm of the other turned up and presented to the fire,—not to keep it from him, for there is no glare or scorch about it,—but to intercept and have a more kindly feel of its genial warmth. It is thus that the greatest and wisest of mankind have sat and meditated ; a

homely truism perhaps, but such a one as we are apt enough to forget. We talk of going to Athens or to Rome to see the precise objects which the Greeks and Romans beheld, and forget that the moon, which may be looking upon us at the moment, is the same identical planet that enchanted Homer and Virgil, and that has been contemplated and admired by all the great men and geniuses that have existed ; by Socrates and Plato in Athens, by the Antonines in Rome, by the Alfreds, the l'Hospitals, the Miltos, Newtons, and Shakspeares. In like manner, we are anxious to discover how these great men and poets appeared in common, what habits they loved, in what way they talked and meditated, nay, in what postures they delighted to sit, and whether they indulged in the same tricks and little comforts that we do. Look at nature and their works, and we shall see that they did, and that, when we act naturally and think earnestly, we are reflecting their commonest habits to the life. Thus we have seen Horace talking of his blazing hearth and snug accommodations like the jolliest of our acquaintances ; and thus we may safely imagine that Milton was in some such attitude as I have described, when he sketched that enchanting little picture, which beats all the cabinet portraits that have been introduced :—

“Or if the air will not permit,
Some still removed place will fit,

Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowsy charm
To bless the doors from nightly harm."

—But to attend to our fireside. The evening is beginning to gather in. The window which, presents a large face of watery grey, intersected by strong lines, is imperceptibly becoming darker ; and as that becomes darker, the fire assumes a more glowing presence. The contemplatist keeps his easy posture, absorbed in his fancies ; and every thing around him is still and serene. The stillness would even ferment in his ear, and whisper, as it were, of what the air contained : but a minute coil, just sufficient to hinder that busier silence, click in the baking coal, while every now and then the light ashes shed themselves below, or a stronger, but still a gentle, flame flutters up with a gleam over the chimney. At length, the darker objects in the room mingle ; the gleam of the fire streaks with a restless light the edges of the furniture, and reflects itself in the blackening window ; while his feet take a gentle move on the fender, and then settle again, and his face comes out of the general darkness, earnest even in indolence, and pale in the very ruddiness of what it looks upon. This is the only time perhaps at which sheer idleness is salutary and refreshing. How ob-

served with the smallest effort is every trick and aspect of the fire ! A coal falling in,—a fleet-tering fume,—a miniature mockery of a flash of lightning, nothing escapes the eye and the imagination. Sometimes a little flame appears at the corner of the grate like a quivering spangle ; sometimes it swells out at top into a restless and brief lambency ; anon it is seen only by a light beneath the grate, or it curls around one of the bars like a tongue, or darts out with a spiral thinness and a sulphureous and continued puffing as from a reed. The glowing coals meantime exhibit the shifting forms of hills and vales and gulfs,—of fiery Alps, whose heat is uninhabitable even by spirit, or of black precipices, from which swart fairies seem about to spring away on sable wings ;—then heat and fire are forgotten, and walled towns appear, and figures of unknown animals, and far-distant countries scarcely to be reached by human journey ;—then coaches, and camels, and barking dogs as large as either, and forms that combine every shape and suggest every fancy ;—till at last, the ragged coals tumbling together, reduce the vision to chaos, and the huge profile of a gaunt and grinning face seems to make a jest of all that has passed.—

During these creations of the eye, the thought roves about into a hundred abstractions, some of them suggested by the fire,—some of them suggested by that suggestion, — some

of them arising from the general sensation of comfort and composure, contrasted with whatever the world affords of evil, or dignified by high wrought meditation on whatsoever gives hope to benevolence and inspiration to wisdom. The philosopher at such moments plans his Utopian schemes, and dreams of happy certainties which he cannot prove:—the lover, happier and more certain, fancies his mistress with him, unobserved and confiding, his arm round her waist, her head upon his shoulder, and earth and heaven contained in that sweet possession:—the poet, thoughtful as the one, and ardent as the other, springs off at once above the world, treads every turn of the harmonious spheres, darts up with gleaming wings through the sunshine of a thousand systems, and stops not till he has found a perfect paradise, whose fields are of young roses, and whose air is music,—whose waters are the liquid diamond,—whose light is as radiance through crystal,—whose dwellings are laurel bowers,—whose language is poetry,—whose inhabitants are congenial souls,—and to enter the very verge of whose atmosphere strikes beauty on the face, and felicity on the heart.—Alas, that flights so lofty should ever be connected with earth by threads as slender as they are long, and that the least twitch of the most common-place hand should be able to snatch down the viewless wanderer to existing comforts!—The entrance of a single candle

dissipates at once the twilight and the sunshine, and the ambitious dreamer is summoned to his tea!

No. XXVII.

THE SUBJECT CONCLUDED.

“Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And, while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups
That cheer, but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.”

NEVER was snug hour more feelingly commended!—Cowper was not a *great* poet; his range was neither wide nor lofty, but, such as it was, he had it completely to himself; he is the poet of quiet life and familiar observation.—The fire, we see, is now stirred, and becomes very different from the one we have just left; it puts on its liveliest aspect in order to welcome those to whom the tea-table is a point of meeting, and it is the business of the firesider to cherish this aspect for the remainder of the evening. How light and easy the coals look! How ardent is the roominess within the bars! How airily do the volumes of smoke course each other up the chimney, like so many fantastic and indefinite spirits, while the eye in vain endeavours to ac-

company any one of them ! The flames are not so fierce as in the morning, but still they are active and powerful ; and if they do not roar up the chimney, they make a constant and playful noise, that is extremely to the purpose. Here they come out at top with a leafy swirl ; there they dart up spirally and at once,—there they form a lambent assemblage that shifts about on its own ground, and is continually losing and regaining its vanishing members. I confess I take particular delight in seeing a good blaze at top ; and my impatience to produce it will sometimes lead me into great rashness in the article of poking,—that is to say, I use the poker at the top instead of the middle of the fire, and go probing it about in search of a flame. A lady of my acquaintance,—“near and dear,” as they say in Parliament,—will tell me of this fault twenty times in a day, and every time so good-humouredly that it is mere want of generosity in me not to amend it ; but somehow or other I do not. The consequence is that, after a momentary ebullition of blaze, the fire becomes dark and sleepy, and is in danger of going out. It is like a boy at school in the hands of a bad master, who, thinking him dull, and being impatient to render him brilliant, beats him about the head and ears till he produces the very evil he would prevent. But, on the present occasion, I forbear to use the poker :—there is no need of it :—every thing is comfortable ; every thing

snug and sufficient. How equable is the warmth around us! How cherishing this rug to one's feet! How complacent the cup at one's lip! What a fine broad light is diffused from the fire over the circle, gleaming in the urn and the polished mahogany, bringing out the white garments of the ladies, and giving a poetic warmth to their face and hair! I need not mention all the good things that are said at tea,—still less the gallant. Good-humour never has an audience more disposed to think it wit, nor gallantry an hour of service more blameless and elegant. Ever since tea has been known, its clear and gentle powers of inspiration have been acknowledged, from Waller paying his court at the circle of Catharine of Braganza, to Dr. Johnson receiving homage at the parties of Mrs. Thrale. The former, in his lines, upon hearing it "commended by her Majesty," ranks it at once above myrtle and laurel, and her Majesty, of course, agreed with him :—

“ Venus her myrtle, Phœbus has his bays ;
Tea both excels, which she vouchsafes to praise.
The *best of queens*, and best of herbs, we owe
To that bold nation, which the way did show
To the fair region where the sun does rise,
Whose rich productions we so justly prize.
The Muse’s friend, Tea, does our fancy aid,
Repress those vapours which the head invade,
And keeps that palace of the soul serene,
Fit, on her birth-day, to salute the Queen.”

The eulogies pronounced on his favourite beve-

rage by Dr. Johnson, are too well known to be repeated here ; and the commendatory inscription of the Emperor Kien Long,—to an European taste at least,—is somewhat too dull, unless his Majesty's tea-pot has been shamefully translated. For my own part, though I have the highest respect, as I have already shown, for this genial drink, which is warm to the cold, and cooling to the warm, I confess, as Montaigne would have said, that I prefer coffee,—particularly in my political capacity :—

“ Coffee, that makes the Politician wise
To see through all things with his half-shut eyes.”

There is something in it, I think, more lively, and, at the same time, more substantial. Besides, I never see it but it reminds me of the Turks and their Arabian tales,—an association infinitely preferable to any Chinese ideas ; and, like the king who put his head into the tub, I am transported into distant lands the moment I dip into the coffee-cup,—at one minute ranging the valleys with Sinbad, at another encountering the fairies on the wing by moonlight, at a third exploring the haunts of the cursed Maugraby, or wrapt into the silence of that delicious solitude from which Prince Agib was carried by the fatal horse. Then, if I wish to poeticize upon it at home, there is Belinda, with her sylphs, drinking it in such state as nothing but poetry can supply :—

“ For lo ! the board with cups and spoons is crown’d,
The berries crackle, and the mill turns round :
On shining altars of japan they raise
The silver lamp ; the fiery spirits blaze ;
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
And China’s earth receives the smoking tide :
At once they gratify the scent and taste,
And frequent cups prolong the rich repast.
Straight hover round the fair her airy band ;
Some, as she sipp’d, the fuming liquor fann’d ;
Some o’er her lap their careful plumes display’d,
Trembling, and conscious of the rich brocade.”

It must be acknowledged, however, that the general association of ideas is at present in favour of tea, which, on that account, has the advantage of suggesting no confinement to particular ranks or modes of life. Let there be but a fireside, and any body, of any denomination, may be fancied enjoying the luxury of a cup of tea, from the duchess in the evening drawing-room, who makes it the instrument of displaying her white hand, to the washerwoman at her early tub, who, having had nothing to signify since five, sits down to it with her shining arms and corrugated fingers at six. If there is any one station of life in which it is enjoyed to most advantage, it is that of mediocrity, — that in which all comfort is reckoned to be best appreciated, because, while there is taste to enjoy, there is necessity to earn the enjoyment ; and I cannot conclude the hour before us with a better climax of snugness than is presented in the following pleasing little verses. The author, I

believe, is unknown, and may not have been much of a poet in matters of fiction ; but who will deny his taste for matters of reality, or say that he has not handled his subject to perfection ?

“ The hearth was clean, the fire was clear,
The kettle on for tea,
Palemon in his elbow-chair,
As blest as man could be.

Clarinda, who his heart possess'd,
And was his new-made bride,
With head reclin'd upon his breast
Sat toying by his side.

Stretch'd at his feet, in happy state,
A fav'rite dog was laid,
By whom a little sportive cat
In wanton humour play'd.

Clarinda's hand he gently prest ;
She stole an amorous kiss,
And, blushing, modestly confess'd
The fulness of her bliss.

Palemon, with a heart elate,
Pray'd to Almighty Jove
That it might ever be his fate,
Just so to live and love.

Be this eternity, he cried,
And let no more be given :
Continue thus my lov'd fireside,
I ask no other heaven.”

The Happy Fireside.—Elegant Extracts.

There are so many modes of spending the remainder of the evening between tea-time and bed-time (for I protest against all suppers that

are not light enough to be taken on the knee), that a general description would avail me nothing, and I cannot be expected to enter into such a variety of particulars. Suffice it to say that, where the fire is duly appreciated, and the circle good-humoured, none of them can be unpleasant, whether the party be large or small, young or old, talkative or contemplative. If there is music, a good fire will be particularly grateful to the performers, who are often seated at the farther end of the room; for it is really shameful that a lady who is charming us all with her voice, or firing us, at the harp or piano, with the lightning of her fingers, should at the very moment be trembling with cold. As to cards, which were invented for the solace of a mad prince, and which are only tolerable, in my opinion, when we can be as mad as he was, that is to say, at a round game,—I cannot by any means patronize them, as a conscientious Firesider: for, not to mention all the other objections, the card-table is as awkward, in a fireside point of view, as the dinner-table, and is not to be compared with it in sociality. If it be necessary to pay so ill a compliment to the company as to have recourse to some amusement of the kind, there is chess or draughts, which may be played on a tablet by the fire; but nothing is like discourse, freely uttering the fancy as it comes, and varied, perhaps, with a little music, or with the perusal of some favourite passages which

excite the comments of the circle. It is then, if tastes happen to be accordant, and the social voice is frank as well as refined, that the "sweet music of speech" is heard in its best harmony, differing only for apter sweetness, and mingling but for happier participation, while the mutual sense smilingly blends in with every rising measure,

" And female stop smoothens the charm o'er all."

This is the finished evening; this the quickener at once and the calmer of tired thought; this the spot where our better spirits await to exalt and enliven us, when the daily and vulgar ones have discharged their duty!

" Questo è il Paradiso,
Più dolce, che fra l' acque, e fra l' arene
In ciel son le Sirene."

TASSO. *Rime Amoroze.*

" Here, here is found
A sweeter Paradise of sound
Than where the Sirens take their summer stands
Among the breathing waters and glib sands."

Bright fires and joyous faces,—and it is no easy thing for philosophy to say good night. But health must be enjoyed, or nothing will be enjoyed; and the charm should be broken at a reasonable hour. Far be it, however, from a rational Firesider not to make exceptions to the rule, when friends have been long asunder, or when some domestic celebration has called them together, or even when hours peculiarly con-

genial render it difficult to part. At all events, the departure must be a voluntary matter ; and here I cannot help exclaiming against the gross and villainous trick which some people have, when they wish to get rid of their company, of letting their fires go down, and the snuffs of their candles run to seed :—it is paltry and palpable, and argues bad policy as well as breeding ; for such of their friends as have a different feeling of things may chance to be disgusted with them altogether, while the careless or unpolite may choose to revenge themselves on the appeal, and face it out gravely till the morning. If a common visitor be inconsiderate enough, on an ordinary occasion, to sit beyond all reasonable hour, it must be reckoned as a fatality,—as an ignorance of men and things, against which you cannot possibly provide,—as a sort of visitation, which must be borne with patience, and which is not likely to recur often, if you know whom you invite, and those who are invited know you. But with an occasional excess of the fireside what social virtue shall quarrel ? A single friend, perhaps, loiters behind the rest ;—you are alone in the house ;—you have just got upon a subject delightful to you both : the fire is of a cendent brightness ; the wind howls out of doors ; the rain beats ; the cold is piercing ! Sit down.—This is a time when the most melancholy temperament may defy the clouds and storms, and even extract from them a pleasure that will take

no substance by daylight. The ghost of his happiness sits by him, and puts on the likeness of former hours ;—and if such a man can be made comfortable by the moment, what enjoyment may it not furnish to an unclouded spirit ! If the excess belong not to vice, temperance does not forbid it when it only grows out of occasion. The great Poet, whom I have quoted so often for the fireside, and who will enjoy it with us to the last, was, like the rest of our great poets, an ardent recommender of temperance in all its branches ; but though he practised what he preached, he could take his night out of the hands of sleep as well as the most entrenching of us. To pass over, as foreign to our subject in point of place, his noble wish that he might “*oft outwatch the bear,*” with what a wrapped-up recollection of snugness, in the elegy on his friend Diodati, does he describe the fireside enjoyment of a winter’s night ?

“ Pectora cui credam ? Quis me lenire docebit
 Mordaces curas ? Quis longam fallere noctem
 Dulcibus alloquiis, grato cum sibilat igni
 Molle pyrum, et nucibus strepitat focus, et malus Au-
 ster
 Miscet cuncta foris, et desuper intonat ulmo ? ”

“ In whom shall I confide ? Whose counsel find
 A balmy med’cine for my troubled mind ?
 Or whose discourse, with innocent delight,
 Shall fill me now, and cheat the wintry night,
 When hisses on my hearth the pulpy pear,
 And black’ning chesnut start and crackle there,

While storms abroad the dreary meadows whelm,
And the wind thunders through the neighb'ring elm."

COWPER'S *Translation*.

Even when left alone, there is sometimes a charm in watching out the decaying fire,—in getting closer and closer to it with tilted chair and knees against the bars, and letting the whole multitude of fancies, that work in the night silence, come whispering about the yielding faculties. The world around is silent; and for a moment the very cares of day seem to have gone with it to sleep, leaving you to catch a waking sense of disenthralment, and to commune with a thousand airy visitants that come to play with innocent thoughts. Then, for imagination's sake, not for superstition's, are recalled the stories of the Secret World and the midnight pranks of Fairyism. The fancy roams out of doors after rustics led astray by the jack-o'-lantern, or minute laughings heard upon the wind, or the night spirit on his horse that comes flouncing through the air on his way to a surfeited citizen, or the tiny morris-dance that springs up in the watery glimpses of the moon;—or keeping at home, it finds a spirit in every room peeping at it as it opens the door, while a cry is heard from upstairs announcing the azure marks inflicted by

"The nips of fairies upon maids' white hips,"

or hearing a snoring from below, it tiptoes down into the kitchen, and beholds where

—“Lies him down the lubber fiend,
And stretch'd out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength.”

Presently the whole band of fairies, ancient and modern,—the dæmons, sylphs, gnomes, sprites, elves, peries, genii, and above all, the fairies of the fireside, the salamanders, lob-lie-by-the-fires, lars, lemures, larvæ, come flitting between the fancy's eyes, and the dying coals, some with their weapons and lights, others with grave steadfastness on book or dish, others of the softer kind with their arch looks, and their conscious pretence of attitude, while a minute music tinkles in the ear, and Oberon gives his gentle order:—

“Through this house in glimmering light
By the dead and drowsy fire,
Every elf and fairy sprite
Hop as light as bird from briar;
And this ditty, after me,
Sing and dance it trippingly.”

Anon, the whole is vanished, and the dreamer, turning his eye down aside, almost looks for a laughing sprite, gazing at him from a tiny chair, and mimicking his face and attitude.—Idle fancies these, and incomprehensible to minds clogged with every-day earthliness,—but not useless, either as an exercise of the invention, or even as adding consciousness to the range and destiny of the soul. They will occupy us too, and steal us away from ourselves, when

other recollections fail us or grow painful,—when friends are found selfish, or better friends can but commiserate, or when the world has nothing in it to compare with what we have missed out of it. They may even lead us to higher and more solemn meditations, till we work up our way beyond the clinging and heavy atmosphere of this earthly sojourn, and look abroad upon the light that knows neither blemish nor bound, while our ears are saluted at that egress by the harmony of the skies, and our eyes behold the lost and congenial spirits that we have loved, hastening to welcome us with their sparkling eyes and their curls that are ripe with sunshine.

But earth recalls us again ;—the last flame is out ;—the fading embers tinkle with a gaping dreariness ; and the chill reminds us where we should be.—Another gaze on the hearth that has so cheered us, and the last lingering action is to wind up the watch for the next day.—Upon how many anxieties shall the finger of that brief chronicler strike,—and upon how many comforts too!—To-morrow our fire shall be trimmed anew ; and so, gentle reader, good night :—may the weariness I have caused you make sleep the pleasanter !

“ Let no lamenting cryes, nor dolefull tears,
Be heard all night within, nor yet without ;
Ne let false whispers, breeding hidden fears,
Break gentle sleep with misconceived doubt.

Let no deluding dreams, nor dreadful sights,
 Make sudden, sad affrights,
 Ne let hobgoblins, names whose sense we see not,
 Fray us with things that be not ;
 But let still silence true night-watches keep,
 That sacred peace may in assurance reigne,
 And timely sleep, since it is time to sleep,
 May pour his limbs forth on your pleasant plaine."

SPENSER's *Epithalamion*

L. H.

No. XXVIII.

CHARACTER OF THE LATE MR. PITT.*

THE character of Mr. Pitt was, perhaps, one of the most singular that ever existed. With few talents, and fewer virtues, he acquired and preserved, in one of the most trying situations, and in spite of all opposition, the highest reputation for the possession of every moral excellence, and as having carried the attainments of eloquence and wisdom as far as human abilities could go. This he did (strange as it may appear) by a negation (together with the common virtues) of the common vices of human nature, and by the complete negation of every other talent that might interfere with the only ones which he possessed in a supreme degree, and which, indeed, may be made to include the appearance of all others,—an artful use of words, and a certain dexterity of logical arrangement. In

* Written in 1806.

these alone his power consisted ; and the defect of all other qualities, which usually constitute greatness, contributed to the more complete success of these. Having no strong feelings, no distinct perceptions,—his mind having no link, as it were, to connect it with the world of external nature, every subject presented to him nothing more than a *tabula rasa*, on which he was at liberty to lay whatever colouring of language he pleased ; having no general principles, no comprehensive views of things, no moral habits of thinking, no system of action, there was nothing to hinder him from pursuing any particular purpose by any means that offered ; having never any plan, he could not be convicted of inconsistency, and his own pride and obstinacy were the only rules of his conduct. Without insight into human nature, without sympathy with the passions of men, or apprehension of their real designs, he seemed perfectly insensible to the consequences of things, and would believe nothing till it actually happened. The fog and haze in which he saw every thing communicated itself to others ; and the total indistinctness and uncertainty of his own ideas tended to confound the perceptions of his hearers more effectually than the most ingenuous misrepresentation could have done. Indeed, in defending his conduct, he never seemed to consider himself as at all responsible for the success of his measures, or to suppose that

future events were in our own power ; but that, as the best laid schemes might fail, and there was no providing against all possible contingencies, this was a sufficient excuse for our plunging at once into any dangerous or absurd enterprise without the least regard to consequences. His reserved logic confined itself solely to the *possible* and the *impossible*, and he appeared to regard the *probable* and *improbable*, the only foundation of moral prudence or political wisdom, as beneath the notice of a profound statesman ; as if the pride of the human intellect were concerned in never entrusting itself with subjects where it may be compelled to acknowledge its weakness. Nothing could ever drive him out of his dull forms, and naked generalities ; which, as they are susceptible neither of degree nor variation, are therefore equally applicable to every emergency that can happen : and in the most critical aspect of affairs, he saw nothing but the same flimsy web of remote possibilities and metaphysical uncertainty. In his mind, the wholesome pulp of practical wisdom and salutary advice was immediately converted into the dry chaff and husks of a miserable logic. From his manner of reasoning, he seemed not to have believed that the truth of his statements depended on the reality of the facts, but that the facts themselves depended on the order in which he arranged them in words ; you would not

suppose him to be agitating a serious question, which had real grounds to go upon, but to be declaiming upon an imaginary thesis, proposed as an exercise in the schools. He never set himself to examine the force of the objections that were brought against him, or attempted to defend his measures upon clear, solid grounds of his own ; but constantly contented himself with first gravely stating the logical form, or dilemma to which the question reduced itself ; and then, after having declared his opinion, proceeded to amuse his hearers by a series of rhetorical common-places, connected together in grave, sonorous, and elaborately constructed periods, without ever shewing their real application to the subject in dispute. Thus, if any member of the opposition disapproved of any measure, and enforced his objections by pointing out the many evils with which it was fraught, or the difficulties attending its execution, his only answer was, “ that it was true there might be inconveniences attending the measure proposed, but we were to remember that every expedient that could be devised might be said to be nothing more than a choice of difficulties, and that all that human prudence could do was to consider on which side the advantages lay ; that, for his part, he conceived that the present measure was attended with more advantages and fewer disadvantages than any other that could be adopted ; that if we were diverted from our object by every appearance of

difficulty, the wheels of government would be clogged by endless delays and imaginary grievances ; that most of the objections made to the measure appeared to him to be trivial, others of them unfounded and improbable ; or that, if a scheme, free from all these objections, could be proposed, it might, after all, prove inefficient ; while, in the meantime, a material object remained unprovided for, or the opportunity of action was lost." This mode of reasoning is admirably described by Hobbes, in speaking of the writings of some of the schoolmen, of whom he says, that " they had learned the trick of imposing what they list upon their readers, and declining the force of true reason by verbal forks, that is, distinctions, which signify nothing, but serve only to astonish the multitude of ignorant men." That what we have here stated comprehends the whole force of his mind, which consisted solely in this evasive dexterity and perplexing formality, assisted by a copiousness of words and common-place topics, will, we think, be evident to any one who carefully looks over his speeches, undazzled by the reputation or personal influence of the speaker. It will be in vain to look in them for any of the common proofs of human genius or wisdom. He has not left behind him a single memorable saying, —not one profound maxim,—one solid observation,—one forcible description,—one beautiful thought,— one humourous picture,— one af-

fecting sentiment. He has made no addition whatever to the stock of human knowledge. He did not possess any one of those faculties which contribute to the instruction and delight of mankind,—depth of understanding, imagination, sensibility, wit, vivacity, clear and solid judgment. But it may be asked, If these qualities are not to be found in him, where are we to look for them? And we may be required to point out instances of them. We shall answer, then, that he had none of the abstract, legislative wisdom, refined sagacity, or rich, impetuous, high-wrought imagination of Burke; the manly eloquence, exact knowledge, vehemence, and natural simplicity of Fox: the ease, brilliancy, and acuteness of Sheridan. It is not merely that he had not all these qualities in the degree that they were severally possessed by his rivals, but he had not any of them in any remarkable degree. His reasoning is a technical arrangement of unmeaning common-places, his eloquence rhetorical, his style monotonous and artificial. If he could pretend to any one excellence more than another it was to taste in composition. There is certainly nothing low, nothing puerile, nothing far-fetched or abrupt in his speeches; there is a kind of faultless regularity pervading them throughout; but in the confined, formal, passive mode of eloquence which he adopted, it seemed rather more difficult to commit errors than to avoid them. A man who is determined never to move out of

the beaten road cannot lose his way. However, habit, joined to the peculiar mechanical memory which he possessed, carried this correctness to a degree which, in an extemporaneous speaker, was almost miraculous: he, perhaps, hardly ever uttered a sentence that was not perfectly regular and connected. In this respect, he not only had the advantage over his own contemporaries, but perhaps no one that ever lived equalled him in this singular faculty. But for this, he would always have passed for a common man; and to this the constant sameness, and, if we may so say, vulgarity of his ideas, must have contributed not a little, as there was nothing to distract his mind from this one object of his unintermittent attention: and as, even in his choice of words, he never aimed at anything more than a certain general propriety and stately uniformity of style. His talents were exactly fitted for the situation in which he was placed; where it was his business not to overcome others, but to avoid being overcome. He was able to baffle opposition, not from strength or firmness, but from the evasive ambiguity and impalpable nature of his resistance, which gave no hold to the rude grasp of his opponents: no force could bind the loose phantom, and his mind (though "not matchless, and his pride humbled by such rebuke") soon rose from defeat unhurt,

"And in its liquid texture, mortal wound
Received no more than can the fluid air."

W. H.

No. XXIX.

ON RELIGIOUS HYPOCRISY.

RELIGION either makes men wise and virtuous, or it makes them set up false pretences to both. In the latter case, it makes them hypocrites to themselves as well as others. Religion is, in grosser minds, an enemy to self-knowledge. The consciousness of the presence of an all-powerful Being, who is both the witness and judge of every thought, word, and action, where it does not produce its proper effect, forces the religious man to practise every mode of deceit upon himself with respect to his real character and motives; for it is only by being wilfully blind to his own faults that he can suppose they will escape the eye of Omniscience. Consequently, the whole business of a religious man's life, if it does not conform to the strict line of his duty, may be said to be to gloss over his errors to himself, and to invent a thousand shifts and palliations, in order to hoodwink the Almighty. While he is sensible of his own delinquency, he knows that it cannot escape the penetration of his invisible Judge; and the distant penalty annexed to every offence, though not sufficient to make him desist from the commission of it, will not suffer him to rest easy, till he has made

some compromise with his own conscience as to his motives for committing it. As far as relates to this world, a cunning knave may take a pride in the imposition he practises upon others ; and, instead of striving to conceal his true character from himself, may chuckle with inward satisfaction at the folly of those who are not wise enough to detect it. "But 'tis not so above." This shallow, skin-deep hypocrisy will not serve the turn of the religious devotee, who is "compelled to give in evidence against himself," and who must first become the dupe of his own imposture, before he can flatter himself with the hope of concealment, as children hide their eyes with their hands, and fancy that no one can see them. Religious people often pray very heartily for the forgiveness of "a multitude of trespasses and sins," as a mark of their humility, but we never knew them admit any one fault in particular, or acknowledge themselves in the wrong in any instance whatever. The natural jealousy of self-love is in them heightened by the fear of damnation, and they plead *Not Guilty* to every charge brought against them, with all the conscious terrors of a criminal at the bar. It is for this reason that the greatest hypocrites in the world are religious hypocrites.

This quality, as it has been sometimes found united with the clerical character, is known by the name of *Priestcraft*. The Ministers of Religion are perhaps more liable to this vice than

any other class of people. They are obliged to assume a greater degree of sanctity, though they have it not, and to screw themselves up to an unnatural pitch of severity and self-denial. They must keep a constant guard over themselves, have an eye always to their own persons, never relax in their gravity, nor give the least scope to their inclinations. A single slip, if discovered, may be fatal to them. Their influence and superiority depend on their pretensions to virtue and piety; and they are tempted to draw liberally on the funds of credulity and ignorance allotted for their convenient support. All this cannot be very friendly to downright simplicity of character. Besides, they are so accustomed to inveigh against the vices of others that they naturally forget that they have any of their own to correct. They see vice as an object always out of themselves, with which they have no other concern than to denounce and stigmatize it. They are only reminded of it *in the third person*. They as naturally associate sin and its consequence with their flocks as a pedagogue associates a false concord and flogging with his scholars. If we may so express it, they serve as conductors to the lightning of divine indignation, and have only to point the thunders of the law at others. They identify themselves with that perfect system of faith and morals, of which they are the professed teachers, and regard any imputation on their conduct as

an indirect attack on the function to which they belong, or as compromising the authority under which they act. It is only the head of the Popish church who assumes the title of *God's Vicegerent upon earth*; but the feeling is nearly common to all the oracular interpreters of the will of Heaven—from the successor of St. Peter down to the simple, unassuming Quaker, who, disclaiming the imposing authority of title and office, yet fancies himself the immediate organ of a preternatural impulse, and affects to speak only as the Spirit moves him.

There is another way in which the formal profession of religion aids hypocrisy, by erecting a secret tribunal, to which those who affect a more than ordinary share of it can (in case of need) appeal from the judgments of men. The religious impostor, reduced to his last shift, and having no other way left to avoid the most “open and apparent shame,” rejects the fallible decisions of the world, and thanks God that there is one who knows the heart. He is amenable to a higher jurisdiction, and, while all is well with Heaven, he can pity the errors, and smile at the malice of his enemies! Whatever cuts men off from their dependence on common opinion or obvious appearances, must open a door to evasion and cunning, by setting up a standard of right and wrong in every one's own breast, of the truth of which nobody can judge but the person himself. There are some fine

instances in the old plays and novels (the best commentaries on human nature) of the effect of this principle, in giving the last finishing to the character of duplicity. Miss Harris, in Fielding's *Amelia*, is one of the most striking. Molière's *Tartuffe* is another instance of the facility with which religion may be perverted to the purposes of the most flagrant hypocrisy. It is an impenetrable fastness, to which this worthy person, like so many others, retires without the fear of pursuit. It is an additional disguise, in which he wraps himself up like a cloak. It is a stalking-horse, which is ready on all occasions,—an invisible conscience, which goes about with him,—his good genius, that becomes surety for him in all difficulties,—swears to the purity of his motives,—extricates him out of the most desperate circumstances,—baffles detection, and furnishes a plea to which there is no answer.

The same sort of reasoning will account for the old remark, that persons who are stigmatized as non-conformists to the established religion, Jews, Presbyterians, &c., are more disposed to this vice than their neighbours. They are injured to the contempt of the world, and steeled against its prejudices: and the same indifference which fortifies them against the unjust censures of mankind may be converted, as occasion requires, into a screen for the most pitiful conduct. They have no cordial sympathy with others, and

therefore, no sincerity in their intercourse with them. It is the necessity of concealment, in the first instance, that produces, and is, in some measure, an excuse for the habit of hypocrisy.

Hypocrisy, as it is connected with cowardice, seems to imply weakness of body or want or spirit. The impudence and insensibility which belong to it ought to suppose robustness of constitution. There is certainly a very successful and formidable class of sturdy, jolly, able-bodied hypocrites, the Friar Johns of the profession. Raphael has represented Elymas the Sorcerer with a hard iron visage, and large uncouth figure, made up of bones and muscles ; as one not troubled with weak nerves or idle scruples—as one who repelled all sympathy with others—who was not to be jostled out of his course by their censures or suspicions—and who could break with ease through the cobweb snares which he had laid for the credulity of others, without being once entangled in his own delusions. His outward form betrays the hard, unimaginative, self-willed understanding of the sorcerer.

W. H.

No. XXX.

ON THE LITERARY CHARACTER.

THE following remarks are prefixed to the account of Baron Grimm's Correspondence in a late number of a celebrated Journal :—

“There is nothing more exactly painted in these graphical volumes than the character of M. Grimm himself; and the beauty of it is that, as there is nothing either natural or peculiar about it, it may stand for the character of all the wits and philosophers he frequented. He had more wit, perhaps, and more sound sense and information, than the greatest part of the society in which he lived; but the leading traits belong to the whole class, and to all classes, indeed, in similar situations, in every part of the world. Whenever there is a very large assemblage of persons who have no other occupation but to amuse themselves, there will infallibly be generated acuteness of intellect, refinement of manners, and good taste in conversation;—and, with the same certainty, all profound thought, and all serious affection, will be discarded from their society.

“The multitude of persons and things that force themselves on the attention in such a scene, and the rapidity with which they succeed each other, and pass away, prevent any one from making a deep or permanent impression; and the mind, having never been tasked to any course of application, and long habituated to this lively succession and variety of objects, comes at last to require the excitement of perpetual change, and to find a multiplicity of friends as indispensable as a multiplicity of amusements. Thus the characteristics of large

and polished society come almost inevitably to be wit and heartlessness—acuteness and perpetual derision. The same impatience of uniformity, and passion for variety, which give so much grace to their conversation, by excluding all tediousness and pertinacious wrangling, make them incapable of dwelling for many minutes on the feelings and concerns of any one individual; while the constant pursuit of little gratifications, and the weak dread of all uneasy sensations, render them equally averse from serious sympathy and deep thought.

“ The whole style and tone of this publication affords the most striking illustration of these general remarks. From one end of it to the other, it is a display of the most complete heartlessness, and the most uninterrupted levity. It chronicles the deaths of half the author’s acquaintance, and makes jests upon them all; and is much more serious in discussing the merits of an opera-dancer than in considering the evidence for the being of a God, or the first foundations of morality. Nothing, indeed, can be more just or conclusive than the remark that is forced from M. Grimm himself, upon the utter carelessness, and instant oblivion, that followed the death of one of the most distinguished, active, and amiable members of his coterie:—“ Tant il est vrai que ce que nous appellons *la société* est ce qu’il y a de plus léger, de plus ingrat, et de plus frivole au monde!”

These remarks, though shrewd and sensible in themselves, apply rather to the character of M. Grimm and his friends as men of the world, after their initiation into the refined society of Paris and the great world, than as mere men of letters. There is, however, a character which every man of letters has before he comes into society, and which he carries into the world with him, which we shall here attempt to describe.

The weaknesses and vices that arise from a constant intercourse with books are in certain respects the same with those which arise from daily intercourse with the world ; yet each has a character and operation of its own, which may either counteract or aggravate the tendency of the other. The same dissipation of mind, the same listlessness, languor, and indifference, may be produced by both, but they are produced in different ways, and exhibit very different appearances. The defects of the literary character proceed, not from frivolity and voluptuous indolence, but from the overstrained exertion of the faculties, from abstraction and refinement. A man without talents or education might mingle in the same society, might give into all the gaiety and foppery of the age, might see the same "multiplicity of persons and things," but would not become a wit and a philosopher for all that. As far as the change of actual objects, the real variety and dissipation goes, there is no difference between M. Grimm and a courtier of

Francis I.—between the consummate philosopher and the giddy girl—between Paris, amidst the barbaric refinements of the middle of the eighteenth century, and any other metropolis at any other period. It is in the *ideal* change of objects, in the *intellectual* dissipation of literature and of literary society, that we are to seek for the difference. The very same languor and listlessness which, in fashionable life, are owing to the rapid “Succession of persons and things,” may be found, and even in a more intense degree, in the most recluse student, who has no knowledge whatever of the great world, who has never been present at the sallies of a *petit souper*, or complimented a lady on presenting her with a bouquet. It is the province of literature to anticipate the dissipation of real objects, and to increase it. It creates a fictitious restlessness and craving after variety, by creating a fictitious world around us, and by hurrying us, not only through all the mimic scenes of life, but by plunging us into the endless labyrinths of imagination. Thus the common indifference produced by the distraction of successive amusements is superseded by a general indifference to surrounding objects, to real persons and things, occasioned by the disparity between the world of our imagination and that without us. The scenes of real life are not got up in the same style of magnificence ; they want dramatic illusion and effect. The high-wrought feelings

require all the concomitant and romantic circumstances which fancy can bring together to satisfy them, and cannot find them in any given object. M. Grimm was not, by his own account, *born* a lover; but even supposing him to have been, in gallantry of temper, a very Amadis, would it have been necessary that the enthusiasm of a philosopher and a man of genius should have run the gauntlet of all the *bonnes fortunes* of Paris to evaporate into insensibility and indifference? Would not a Clarissa, a new Eloise, a Cassandra, or a Berenice, have produced the same mortifying effects on a person of his great critical acumen and *virtù*? Where, O where could he find the rocks of Meillerie in the precincts of the Palais Royal, or on what lips would Julia's kisses grow? Who, after wandering with Angelica, or having seen the heavenly face of Una, might not meet with impunity a whole circle of literary ladies? Cowley's mistresses reigned by turns in the poet's fancy, and the beauties of King Charles II. perplex the eye in the preference of their charms as much now as they ever did. One trifling coquet only drives out another; but Raphael's Galatea kills the whole race of pertness and vulgarity at once. After ranging, in dizzy mazes, through the regions of imaginary beauty, the mind sinks down, breathless and exhausted, on the earth. In common minds, indifference is produced by mixing with the world. Authors and artists

bring it into the world with them. The disappointment of the ideal enthusiast is indeed greatest at first, and he grows reconciled to his situation by degrees ; whereas the mere man of the world becomes more dissatisfied and fastidious, and more a misanthrope, the longer he lives.

It is much the same in friendships founded on literary motives. Literary men are not attached to the persons of their friends, but to their minds. They look upon them in the same light as on the books in their library, and read them till they are tired. In casual acquaintances friendship grows out of habit. Mutual kindnesses beget mutual attachment ; and numberless little local occurrences in the course of a long intimacy, furnish agreeable topics of recollection, and are almost the only sources of conversation among such persons. They have an immediate pleasure in each other's company. But in literature nothing of this kind takes place. Petty and local circumstances are beneath the dignity of philosophy. Nothing will go down but wit or wisdom. The mind is kept in a perpetual state of violent exertion and expectation, and, as there cannot always be a fresh supply of stimulus to excite it, as the same remarks or the same *bon mots* come to be often repeated, or others so like them, that we can easily anticipate the effect, and are no longer surprised into admiration, we begin to relax in

the frequency of our visits, and the heartiness of our welcome. When we are tired of a book we can lay it down, but we cannot so easily put our friends on the shelf when we grow weary of their society. The necessity of keeping up appearances, therefore, adds to the dissatisfaction on both sides, and at length irritates indifference into contempt.

By the help of arts and science, everything finds an ideal level. Ideas assume the place of reality, and realities sink into nothing. Actual events and objects produce little or no effect on the mind, when it has been long accustomed to draw its strongest interest from constant contemplation. It is necessary that it should, as it were, recollect itself—that it should call out its internal resources, and refine upon its own feelings—place the object at a distance, and embellish it at pleasure.—By degrees all things are made to serve as hints and occasions for the exercise of intellectual activity. It was on this principle that the sentimental Frenchman left his Mistress, in order that he might think of her. Cicero ceased to mourn for the loss of his daughter, when he recollected how fine an opportunity it would afford him to write an eulogy to her memory; and Mr. Shandy lamented over the death of Master Bobby much in the same manner. The insensibility of authors, &c., to domestic and private calamities has been often carried to a ludicrous excess, but it is less than

it appears to be. The genius of philosophy is not yet *quite* understood. For instance, a man who might seem at the moment undisturbed by the death of a wife or mistress, would perhaps never walk out in a fine evening, as long as he lived, without recollecting her; and a disappointment in love that "heaves no sigh, and sheds no tear," may penetrate to the heart, and remain fixed there ever after. *Hæret lateri lethalis arundo.* The blow is only felt by reflection, the rebound is fatal. Our feelings become more ideal; the impression of the moment is less violent, but the effect is more general and permanent. Those whom we love best take nearly the same rank in our estimation as the heroine of a favourite novel! Indeed, after all, compared with the genuine feelings of nature, "clad in flesh and blood," with real passions and affections, conversant about real objects, the life of a mere man of letters and sentiment appears to be at best but a living death; a dim twilight existence: a sort of wandering about in an Elysian Fields of our own making; a refined, spiritual, disembodied state, like that of the ghosts of Homer's heroes, who, we are told, would gladly have exchanged situations with the meanest peasant upon earth!*

* Plato's cave, in which he supposes a man to be shut up all his life with his back to the light, and to see nothing of the figures of men, or other objects that pass by, but

The moral character of men of letters depends very much upon the same principles. All actions are seen through that general medium which reduces them to individual insignificance. Nothing fills or engrosses the mind—nothing seems of sufficient importance to interfere with our present inclination. Prejudices, as well as attachments, lose their hold upon us, and we palter with our duties as we please. Moral obligations, by being perpetually refined upon, and discussed, lose their force and efficacy, become mere dry distinctions of the understanding,

“Play round the head, but never reach the heart.”

Opposite reasons and consequences balance one another, while appetite or interest turns the scale. Hence the severe sarcasm of Rousseau, *Tout homme reflechi est mechant*. In fact, it must be confessed that, as all things produce their extremes, so excessive refinement tends to produce equal grossness. The tenuity of our intellectual desires leaves a void in the mind which requires to be filled up by coarser gratification, and that of the senses is always at hand. They alone always retain their strength. There is not a greater mistake than the common supposition that intellectual pleasures are capable of endless

their shadows on the opposite wall of his cell, so that, when he is let out and sees the real figures, he is only dazzled and confounded by them, seems an ingenious satire on the life of a bookworm.

repetition, and physical ones not so. The one, indeed, may be spread out over a greater surface, they may be dwelt upon and kept in mind at will, and for that very reason they wear out, and pall by comparison, and require perpetual variety. Whereas the physical gratification only occupies us at the moment, is, as it were, absorbed in itself, and forgotten, as soon as it is over, and when it returns, is *as good as new*. No one could ever read the same book for any length of time without being tired of it, but a man is never tired of his meals, however little variety his table may have to boast. This reasoning is equally true of all persons who have given much of their time to study and abstracted speculations. Grossness and sensuality have been remarked with no less triumph in the religious devotee than in the professed philosopher. The perfect joys of heaven do not satisfy the cravings of nature; and the good Canon in Gil Blas might be opposed with effect to some of the portraits in M. Grimm's Correspondence.

W. H.

No. XXXI.

ON COMMON-PLACE CRITICS.

"Nor can I think what thoughts they can conceive."

WE have already given some account of common-place people; we shall in this number

attempt a description of another class of the community, who may be called (by way of distinction) common-place critics. The former are a set of people who have no opinions of their own, and do not pretend to have any ; the latter are a set of people who have no opinions of their own, but who affect to have one upon every subject you can mention. The former are a very honest, good sort of people, who are contented to pass for what they are ; the latter are a very pragmatical, troublesome sort of people, who would pass for what they are not, and try to put off their common-place notions in all companies and on all subjects, as something of their own. They are of both species, the grave and the gay ; and it is hard to say which is the most tiresome.

A common-place critic has something to say upon every occasion, and he always tells you either what is not true, or what you knew before, or what is not worth knowing. He is a person who thinks by proxy, and talks by rote. He differs with you, not because he thinks you are in the wrong, but because he thinks somebody else will think so. Nay, it would be well if he stopped here ; but he will undertake to misrepresent you by anticipation, lest others should misunderstand you, and will set you right, not only in opinions which you have, but in those which you may be supposed to have. Thus, if you say that *Bottom* the weaver is a

character that has not had justice done to it, he shakes his head, is afraid you will be thought extravagant, and wonders you should think the *Midsummer Night's Dream* the finest of all Shakespeare's plays. He judges of matters of taste and reasoning as he does of dress and fashion, by the prevailing tone of good company; and you would as soon persuade him to give up any sentiment that is current there as to wear the hind part of his coat before. By the best company, of which he is perpetually talking, he means persons who live on their own estates and other people's ideas. By the opinion of the world, to which he pays and expects you to pay great deference, he means that of a little circle of his own, where he hears and is heard. Again, *good sense* is a phrase constantly in his mouth, by which he does not mean his own sense or that of any body else, but the opinions of a number of persons who have agreed to take their opinions on trust from others. If any one observes that there is something better than common sense, viz. *uncommon* sense, he thinks this a bad joke. If you object to the opinions of the majority, as often arising from ignorance or prejudice, he appeals from them to the sensible and well-informed; and if you say that there may be other persons as sensible and well-informed as himself and his friends, he smiles at your presumption. If you attempt to prove any thing to him, it is in vain, for he is not thinking of what you say, but of what will be thought of

it. The stronger your reasons, the more incorrigible he thinks you ; and looks upon any attempt to expose his gratuitous assumptions as the wandering of a disordered imagination. His notions are like plaster figures cast in a mould, as brittle as they are hollow ; but they will break before you can make them give way. In fact, he is the representative of a large part of the community, the shallow, the vain, and indolent, of those who have time to talk, and are not bound to think : and he considers any deviation from the select forms of common-place, or the accredited language of conventional impertinence, as compromising the authority under which he acts in his diplomatic capacity. It is wonderful how this class of people agree with one another ; how they herd together in all their opinions ; what a tact they have for folly ; what an instinct for absurdity ; what a sympathy in sentiment ; how they find one another out by infallible signs, like Freemasons ! The secret of this unanimity and strict accord is that not one of them ever admits any opinion that can cost the least effort of mind in arriving at it, or of courage in declaring it. Folly is as consistent with itself as wisdom : there is a certain level of thought and sentiment, which the weakest minds, as well as the strongest, find out as best adapted to them ; and you as regularly come to the same conclusions, by looking no farther than the surface, as if you dug to the centre of

the earth ! You know beforehand what a critic of this class will say on almost every subject the first time he sees you, the next time, the time after that, and so on to the end of the chapter. The following list of his opinions may be relied on :—It is pretty certain that before you have been in the room with him ten minutes, he will give you to understand that Shakspeare was a great, but irregular, genius. Again, he thinks it a question whether any one of his plays, if brought out now for the first time, would succeed. He thinks that *Macbeth* would be the most likely, from the music which has been since introduced into it. He has some doubts as to the superiority of the French school over us in tragedy, and observes that Hume and Adam Smith were both of that opinion. He thinks Milton's pedantry a great blemish in his writings, and that *Paradise Lost* has many prosaic passages in it. He conceives that genius does not always imply taste, and that wit and judgment are very different faculties. He considers Dr. Johnson as a great critic and moralist, and that his Dictionary was a work of prodigious erudition and vast industry ; but that some of the anecdotes of him in Boswell are trifling. He conceives that Mr. Locke was a very original and profound thinker. He thinks Gibbon's style vigorous, but florid. He wonders that the author of *Junius* was never found out. He thinks Pope's translation of the *Iliad* an improvement on the

simplicity of the original, which was necessary to fit it to the taste of modern readers. He thinks there is a great deal of grossness in the old comedies; and that there has been a great improvement in the morals of the higher classes since the reign of Charles II. He thinks the reign of Queen Anne the golden period of our literature; but that, upon the whole, we have no English writer equal to Voltaire. He speaks of Boccaccio as a very licentious writer, and thinks the wit in Rabelais quite extravagant, though he never read either of them. He cannot get through Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, and pronounces all allegorical poetry tedious. He prefers Smollett to Fielding, and discovers more knowledge of the world in *Gil Blas* than in *Don Quixote*. Richardson he thinks very minute and tedious. He thinks the French Revolution has done a great deal of harm to the cause of liberty; and blames Bonaparte for being so ambitious. He reads the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews*, and thinks as they do. He is shy of having an opinion on a new actor or a new singer; for the public do not always agree with the newspapers. He thinks that the moderns have great advantages over the ancients, in many respects. He thinks Jeremy Bentham a greater man than Aristotle. He can see no reason why artists of the present day should not paint as well as Raphael or Titian. For instance, he thinks there is something very elegant and classical in

Mr. Westall's drawings. He has no doubt that Sir Joshua Reynolds's Lectures were written by Burke. He considers Horne Tooke's account of the conjunction *That* very ingenious, and holds that no writer can be called elegant who uses the present for the subjunctive mood, who says, *If it is* for *If it be*. He thinks Hogarth a great master of low, comic humour ; and Cobbett a coarse, vulgar writer. He often talks of men of liberal education, and men without education, as if that made much difference. He judges of people by their pretensions ; and pays attention to their opinions according to their dress and rank in life. If he meets with a fool, he does not find him out ; and if he meets with any one wiser than himself he does not know what to make of him. He thinks that manners are of great consequence to the common intercourse of life. He thinks it difficult to prove the existence of any such thing as original genius, or to fix a general standard of taste. He does not think it possible to define what wit is. In religion, his opinions are liberal. He considers all enthusiasm as a degree of madness, particularly to be guarded against by young minds ; and believes that truth lies in the middle, between the extremes of right and wrong. He thinks that the object of poetry is to please ; and that astronomy is a very pleasing and useful study. He thinks all this, and

a great deal more, that amounts to nothing. We wonder we have remembered one half of it,

“ For true no-meaning puzzles more than wit.”

Though he has an aversion to all new ideas, he likes all new plans and matters of fact; the new Schools for All, the Penitentiary, the new Bedlam, the new Steam-Boats, the Gas-Lights, the new Patent Blacking; every thing of that sort, but the Bible Society. The Society for the Suppression of Vice he thinks a great nuisance, as every honest man must.

In a word, a common-place critic is the pedant of polite conversation. He refers to the opinion of Lord M. or Lady G. with the same air of significance that the learned pedant does to the authority of Cicero or Virgil; retails the wisdom of the day, as the anecdote-monger does the wit; and carries about with him the sentiments of people of a certain respectability in life as the dancing-master does their air, or their valets their clothes.

W. H.

No. XXXII.

THE spirit of poetry is in itself favourable to humanity and liberty: but, we suspect, not when

its aid is most wanted. The spirit of poetry is not the spirit of mortification or of martyrdom. Poetry dwells in a perpetual Utopia of its own, and is, for that reason, very ill calculated to make a Paradise upon earth, by encountering the shocks and disappointments of the world. Poetry, like law, is a fiction ; only a more agreeable one. It does not create difficulties where they do not exist ; but contrives to get rid of them, whether they exist or not. It is not entangled in cobwebs of its own making, but soars above all obstacles. It cannot be " constrained by mastery." It has the range of the universe ; it traverses the empyreum, and looks down on nature from a higher sphere. When it lights upon the earth, it loses some of its dignity and its use. Its strength is in its wings ; its element the air. Standing on its feet, jostling with the crowd, it is liable to be overthrown, trampled on, and defaced ; for its wings are of a dazzling brightness, " heaven's own tint," and the least soil upon them shows to disadvantage. Sullied, degraded as we have seen it, we shall not insult over it, but leave it to Time to take out the stains, seeing it is a thing immortal as itself. " Being so majestic, we should do it wrong to offer it the show of violence." But the best things, in their abuse, often become the worst ; and so it is with poetry, when it is diverted from its proper end. Poets live in an ideal world, where they make every

thing out according to their wishes and fancies. They either find things delightful, or make them so. They feign the beautiful and grand out of their own minds, and imagine all things to be, not what they are, but what they ought to be. They are naturally inventors, creators of truth, of love, and beauty: and while they speak to us from the sacred shrine of their own hearts, while they pour out the pure treasures of thought to the world, they cannot be too much admired and applauded: but when, forgetting their high calling, and becoming tools and puppets in the hands of power, they would pass off the gewgaws of corruption and love-tokens of self-interest as the gifts of the Muse, they cannot be too much despised and shunned. We do not like novels founded on facts, nor do we like poets turned courtiers. Poets, it has been said, succeed best in fiction: and they should for the most part stick to it. Invention, not upon an imaginary subject, is a lie: the varnishing over the vices or deformity of actual objects is hypocrisy. Players leave their finery at the stage-door, or they would be hooted; poets come out into the world with all their bravery on, and yet they would pass for *bona fide* persons. They lend the colours of fancy to whatever they see: whatever they touch becomes gold, though it were lead. With them every Joan is a lady; and kings and queens are human. Matters of fact they embellish at their will, and reason is

the plaything of their passions, their caprice, or interest. There is no practice so base of which they will not become the panders : no sophistry of which their understanding may not be made the voluntary dupe. Their only object is to please their fancy. Their souls are effeminate, half man and half woman :—they want fortitude, and are without principle. If things do not turn out according to their wishes, they will make their wishes turn round to things. They can easily overlook whatever they do not like, and make an idol of any thing they please. The object of poetry is to please : this art naturally gives pleasure and excites admiration. Poets, therefore, cannot do well without sympathy and flattery. It is accordingly very much against the grain that they remain long on the unpopular side of the question. They do not like to be shut out when laurels are to be given away at Court—or places under Government to be disposed of, in romantic situations in the country. They are happy to be reconciled on the first opportunity to prince and people, and to exchange their principles for a pension. They have not always strength of mind to think for themselves ; nor courage enough to bear the unjust stigma of the opinions they have taken upon trust from others. Truth alone does not satisfy their pampered appetites, without the sauce of praise. To prefer truth to all other things, it requires that the mind should have

been at some pains in finding it out, and that we should feel a severe delight in the contemplation of truth, seen by its own clear light, and not as it is reflected in the admiring eyes of the world. A philosopher may perhaps make a shift to be contented with the sober draughts of reason: a poet must have the applause of the world to intoxicate him. Milton, was, however, a poet, and an honest man; he was Cromwell's secretary.

W. H.



No. XXXIII.

ON ACTORS AND ACTING.

PLAYERS are “the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time;” the motley representatives of human nature. They are the only honest hypocrites. Their life is a voluntary dream; a studied madness. The height of their ambition is to be *beside themselves*. To-day kings, to-morrow beggars, it is only when they are themselves that they are nothing. Made up of mimic laughter and tears, passing from the extremes of joy or woe at the prompter’s call, they wear the livery of other men’s fortunes; their very thoughts are not their own. They are, as it were, train-bearers in the pageant of life, and hold a glass up to humanity, fraailer than itself.

We see ourselves at second-hand in them : they shew us all that we are, all that we wish to be, and all that we dread to be. The stage is an epitome, a bettered likeness of the world, with the dull part left out: and, indeed, with this omission, it is nearly big enough to hold all the rest. What brings the resemblance nearer is that, as *they* imitate us, we, in our turn, imitate them. How many fine gentleman do we owe to the stage ! How many romantic lovers are mere Romeos in masquerade : How many soft bosoms have heaved with Juliet's sighs ! They teach us when to laugh and when to weep when to love and when to hate, upon principle and with a good grace ! Wherever there is a play-house, the world will go on not amiss. The stage not only refines the manners, but it is the best teacher of morals, for it is the truest and most intelligible picture of life. It stamps the image of virtue on the mind by first softening the rude materials of which it is composed, by a sense of pleasure. It regulates the passions by giving a loose to the imagination. It points out the selfish and depraved to our detestation ; the amiable and generous to our admiration ; and if it clothes the more seductive vices with the borrowed graces of wit and fancy, even those graces operate as a diversion to the coarser poison of experience and bad example, and often prevent or carry off the infection by inoculating the mind with a certain taste and elegance. To

shew how little we agree with the common declamations against the immoral tendency of the stage on this score, we will hazard a conjecture that the acting of the Beggar's Opera a certain number of nights every year since it was first brought out has done more towards putting down the practice of highway robbery, than all the gibbets that ever were erected. A person, after seeing this piece, is too deeply imbued with a sense of humanity, is in too good humour with himself and the rest of the world, to set about cutting throats or rifling pockets. Whatever makes a jest of vice leaves it too much a matter of indifference for any one in his senses to rush desperately on his ruin for its sake. We suspect that just the contrary effect must be produced by the representation of George Barnwell, which is too much in the style of the Ordinary's sermon to meet with any better success. The mind, in such cases, instead of being deterred by the alarming consequences held out to it, revolts against the denunciation of them as an insult offered to its free-will, and, in a spirit of defiance, returns a practical answer to them, by daring the worst that can happen. The most striking lesson ever read to levity and licentiousness is in the last act of the Inconstant, where young Mirabel is preserved by the fidelity of his mistress, Orinda, in the disguise of a page, from the hands of assassins, into whose power he has been allured by the tempta-

tions of vice and beauty. There never was a rake who did not become in imagination a reformed man, during the representation of the last trying scenes of this admirable comedy.

If the stage is useful as a school of instruction, it is no less so as a source of amusement. It is a source of the greatest enjoyment at the time, and a never-failing fund of agreeable reflection afterwards. The merits of a new play, or of a new actor, are always among the first topics of polite conversation. One way in which public exhibitions contribute to refine and humanise mankind, is by supplying them with ideas and subjects of conversation and interest in common. The progress of civilization is in proportion to the number of common-places current in society. For instance, if we meet with a stranger at an inn or in a stage-coach, who knows nothing but his own affairs, his shop, his customers, his farm, his pigs, his poultry, we can carry on no conversation with him on these local and personal matters: the only way is to let him have all the talk to himself. But if he has fortunately ever seen Mr. Liston act, this is an immediate topic of mutual conversation, and we agree together the rest of the evening in discussing the merits of that inimitable actor, with the same satisfaction as in talking over the affairs of the most intimate friend.

If the stage thus introduces us familiarly to

our contemporaries, it also brings us acquainted with former times. It is an interesting revival of past ages, manners, opinions, dresses, persons, and actions,—whether it carries us back to the wars of York and Lancaster, or half way back to the heroic times of Greece and Rome, in some translation from the French, or quite back to the age of Charles II. in the scenes of Congreve and of Etherege (the gay Sir George!) —happy age, when kings and nobles led purely ornamental lives, when the utmost stretch of a morning's study went no farther than the choice of a sword-knot, or the adjustment of a side-curl; when the soul spoke out in all the pleasing elegance of dress; and beaux and belles, enamoured of themselves in one another's follies, fluttered like gilded butterflies in giddy mazes through the walks of St. James's Park!

A good company of comedians, a Theatre-Royal judiciously managed, is your true Herald's College; the only Antiquarian Society that is worth a rush. It is for this reason that there is such an air of romance about players, and that it is pleasanter to see them, even in their own persons, than any of the three learned professions. We feel more respect for John Kemble in a plain coat than for the Lord Chancellor on the woolsack. He is surrounded, to our eyes, with a greater number of imposing recollections: he is a more reverend piece of formality; a more complicated tissue of costume. We do not know

whether to look upon this accomplished actor as *Pierre*, or *King John*, or *Coriolanus*, or *Cato*, or *Leontes*, or the *Stranger*. But we see in him a stately hieroglyphic of humanity ; a living monument of departed greatness ; a sombre comment on the rise and fall of kings. We look after him till he is out of sight, as we listen to a story of one of *Ossian's* heroes, to “a tale of other times !”

One of the most affecting things we know is to see a favourite actor take leave of the stage. We were present, not long ago, when Mr. Bannister quitted it. We do not wonder that his feelings were overpowered on the occasion : ours were nearly so too. We remembered him in the first heyday of our youthful spirits, in the *Prize*, in which he played so delightfully with that fine old croaker Suett, and Madame Storace, —in the farce of *My Grandmother*, in the *Son-in-law*, in *Autolycus*, and in *Scrub*, in which our satisfaction was at its height. At that time, King and Parsons, and Dodd, and Quick, and Edwin, were in the full vigour of their reputation, who are now all gone. We still feel the vivid delight with which we used to see their names in the play-bills, as we went along to the Theatre. Bannister was one of the last of these that remained ; and we parted with him as we should with one of our oldest and best friends. The most pleasant feature in the profession of a player, and which, indeed, is peculiar to it, is

that we not only admire the talents of those who adorn it, but we contract a personal intimacy with them. There is no class of society whom so many persons regard with affection as actors. We greet them on the stage ; we like to meet them in the streets ; they almost always recal to us pleasant associations ; and we feel our gratitude excited, without the uneasiness of a sense of obligation. The very gaiety and popularity, however, which surround the life of a favourite performer, make the retiring from it a very serious business. It glances a mortifying reflection on the shortness of human life, and the vanity of human pleasures. Something reminds us that “ all the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players.”

No. XXXIV.

ON THE SAME.

It has been considered as the misfortune of first-rate talents for the stage, that they leave no record behind them except that of vague rumour, and that the genius of a great actor perishes with him, “ leaving the world no copy.” This is a misfortune, or at least a mortifying reflection, to actors ; but it is, perhaps, an advantage to the stage. It leaves an opening to

originality. The stage is always beginning anew ;—the candidates for theatrical reputation are always setting out afresh, unencumbered by the affectation of the faults or excellences of their predecessors. In this respect, we should imagine that the average quantity of dramatic talent remains more nearly the same than that in any other walk of art. In no other instance do the complaints of the degeneracy of the moderns seem so unfounded as in this ; and Colley Cibber's account of the regular decline of the stage from the time of Shakspeare to that of Charles II., and from the time of Charles II. to the beginning of George II., appears quite ridiculous. The stage is a place where genius is sure to come upon its legs, in a generation or two at farthest. In the other arts (as painting and poetry), it may be supposed that what has been well done already, by giving rise to endless vapid imitations, is an obstacle to what might be done well hereafter : that the models or *chefs d'œuvre* of art, where they are accumulated, choke up the path to excellence ; and that the works of genius, where they can be rendered permanent and handed down from age to age, not only prevent, but render superfluous, future productions of the same kind. We have not, neither do we want, two Shakspeares, two Miltos, two Raphaels, any more than we require two suns in the same sphere. Even Miss O'Neill stands a little in the way of our recollections

of Mrs. Siddons. But Mr. Kean is an excellent substitute for the memory of Garrick, whom we never saw. When an author dies, it is no matter, for his works remain. When a great actor dies, there is a void produced in society, a gap which requires to be filled up. Who does not go to see Kean? In comedy, Liston is as good as Edwin was when we were school-boys. We grant that we are deficient in genteel comedy; we have no fine gentlemen on the stage—nor off it. That which is merely artificial and local is a matter of mimicry, and must exist, to be well copied. Who, if Garrick were alive, would go to see him? At least, one or the other must have quitted the stage;—

“ For two at a time there’s no mortal could bear.”

We have seen what a ferment has been excited among our living artists by the exhibition of the works of the old Masters at the British Gallery. What would the actors say to it, if, by any spell or power of necromancy, all the celebrated actors, for the last hundred years, could be made to appear again on the boards of Covent-Garden and Drury-Lane, for the last time, in their most brilliant parts? What a rich treat to the town, what a feast for the critics, to go and see Betterton, and Booth, and Wilks, and Sandford, and Nokes, and Leigh, and Penkethman, and Bullock, and Estcourt, and Dogget, and Mrs. Barry, and Mrs. Montfort, and Mrs. Oldfield, and

Mrs. Bracegirdle, and Mrs. Cibber, and Cibber himself, the prince of coxcombs, and Macklin, and Quin, and Rich, and Mrs. Clive, and Mrs. Pritchard, and Mrs. Abington, and Weston, and Shuter, and Garrick, and all the rest of those who “gladdened life, and whose deaths eclipsed the gaiety of nations!” We should certainly be there. We should buy a ticket for the season. We should enjoy *our hundred days* again. We should not miss a single night. We would not, for a great deal, be absent from Betterton’s Hamlet or his Brutus, or from Booth’s Cato, as it was first acted to the contending applause of Whigs and Tories. We should be in the first row when Mrs. Barry (who was kept by Lord Rochester, and with whom Otway was in love) played Monimia or Belvidera; and we suppose we should go to see Mrs. Bracegirdle (with whom all the world was in love) in all her parts. We should then know exactly whether Penkethman’s manner of picking a chicken, and Bullock’s mode of devouring asparagus, answered to the ingenious account of them in the Tatler; and whether Dogget was equal to Dowton — whether Mrs. Montfort* or Mrs.

* The following lively description of this actress is given by Cibber in his *Apology* :—

“ What found most employment for her whole various excellence at once was the part of Melantha, in *Marriage-a-la-Mode*. Melantha is as finished an impertinent as ever fluttered in a drawing-room, and seems to contain the most complete system of female foppery that could possibly be

Abington was the finest lady — whether Wilks or Cibber was the best Sir Harry Wildair,— whether Macklin was really “the Jew that

crowded into the tortured form of a fine lady. Her language, dress, motion, manners, soul, and body, are in a continual hurry to be something more than is necessary or commendable. And, though I doubt it will be a vain labour to offer you a just likeness of Mrs. Montfort's action, yet the fantastic impression is still so strong in my memory that I cannot help saying something, though fantastically, about it. The first ridiculous airs that break from her are upon a gallant never before seen, who delivers her a letter from her father, recommending him to her good graces, as an honourable lover. Here, now, one would think she might naturally shew a little of the sex's decent reserve, though never so slightly covered! No, Sir; not a tittle of it; modesty is the virtue of a poor-soul'd country gentlewoman: she is too much a court-lady to be under so vulgar a confusion; she reads the letter, therefore, with a careless, dropping lip, and an erected brow, humming it hastily over, as if she were impatient to outgo her father's commands by making a complete conquest of him at once: and that the letter might not embarrass her attack, crack! she crumbles it at once into her palm, and pours upon him her whole artillery of airs, eyes, and motion; down goes her dainty, diving body to the ground, as if she were sinking under the conscious load of her own attractions; then launches into a flood of fine language and compliment, still playing her chest forward in fifty falls and risings, like a swan upon waving water; and, to complete her impertinence, she is so rapidly fond of her own wit that she will not give her lover leave to praise it. Silent assenting bows, and vain endeavours to speak, are all the share of the conversation he is admitted to, which at last he is relieved from by her engagement to half a score visits, which she *swims* from him to make, with a promise to return in a twinkling.”

The Life of Colley Cibber, p. 138.

Shakespeare drew," and whether Garrick was, upon the whole, so great an actor as the world would have made him out! Many people have a strong desire to pry into the secrets of futurity; for our own parts, we should be satisfied if we had the power to recal the dead, and live the past over again, as often as we pleased!—Players, after all, have little reason to complain of their hard-earned, short-lived popularity. One thunder of applause from pit, boxes, and gallery, is equal to a whole immortality of posthumous fame; and when we hear an actor, whose modesty is equal to his merit, declare that he would like to see a dog wag his tail in approbation, what must he feel when he sets the whole house in a roar! Besides, Fame, as if their reputation had been entrusted to her alone, has been particularly careful of the renown of her theatrical favourites: she forgets, one by one, and year by year, those who have been great lawyers, great statesmen, and great warriors in their day; but the name of Garrick still survives with the works of Reynolds and of Johnson.

Actors have been accused, as a profession, of being extravagant and dissipated. While they are said to be so, as a piece of common cant, they are likely to continue so. But there is a sentence in Shakspeare which should be stuck as a label in the mouths of our beadle and whippers-in of morality: "The web of our life is of a min-

gled yarn, good and ill together: our virtues would be proud if our faults whipped them not: and our vices would despair if they were not cherished by our virtues." With respect to the extravagance of actors, as a traditional character, it is not to be wondered at. They live from hand to mouth: they plunge from want into luxury; they have no means of making money breed, and all professions that do not live by turning money into money, or have not a certainty of accumulating it in the end by parsimony, spend it. Uncertain of the future, they make sure of the present moment. This is not unwise. Chilled with poverty, steeped in contempt, they sometimes pass into the sunshine of fortune, and are lifted to the very pinnacle of public favour; yet even there cannot calculate on the continuance of success; but are, "like the giddy sailor on the mast, ready with every blast to topple down into the fatal bowels of the deep!" Besides, if the young enthusiast, who is smitten with the stage, and with the public as a mistress, were naturally a close *hunks*, he would become or remain a city clerk, instead of turning player. Again, with respect to the habit of convivial indulgence, an actor, to be a good one, must have a great spirit of enjoyment in himself, strong impulses, strong passions, and a strong sense of pleasure: for it is his business to imitate the passions, and to communicate pleasure to others. A man of genius is not a

machine. The neglected actor may be excused if he drinks oblivion of his disappointments; the successful one if he quaffs the applause of the world, and enjoys the friendship of those who are the friends of the favourites of fortune in draughts of nectar. There is no path so steep as that of fame: no labour so hard as the pursuit of excellence. The intellectual excitement, inseparable from those professions which call forth all our sensibility to pleasure and pain, requires some corresponding physical excitement to support our failure, and not a little to allay the ferment of the spirits attendant on success. If there is any tendency to dissipation beyond this in the profession of a player, it is owing to the prejudices entertained against them, to that spirit of bigotry which in a neighbouring country would deny actors Christian burial after their death and to that cant of criticism, which, in our own, slurs over their characters, while living, with a half-witted jest. Players are only not so respectable as a profession as they might be, because their profession is not respected as it ought to be.

A London engagement is generally considered by actors as the *ne plus ultra* of their ambition, as "a consummation devoutly to be wished," as the great prize in the lottery of their professional life. But this appears to us, who are not in the secret, to be rather the prose termination of their adventurous career: it is the provincial commencement that is the poetical and truly

enviable part of it. After that, they have comparatively little to hope or fear. "The wine of life is drunk, and but the lees remain." In London, they become gentlemen, and the King's servants: but it is the romantic mixture of the hero and the vagabond that constitutes the essence of the player's life. It is the transition from their real to their assumed characters, from the contempt of the world to the applause of the multitude, that gives its zest to the latter, and raises them as much above common humanity at night as in the day-time they are depressed below it. "Hurried from fierce extremes, by contrast made more fierce,"—it is rags and a flock-bed which give their splendour to a plume of feathers and a throne. We should suppose that if the most admired actor on the London stage were brought to confession on this point, he would acknowledge that all the applause he had received from "brilliant and overflowing audiences" was nothing to the light-headed intoxication of unlooked-for success in a barn. In town, actors are criticised: in country-places, they are wondered at, or hooted at: it is of little consequence which, so that the interval is not too long between. For ourselves, we own that the description of the strolling-player in *Gil Blas*, soaking his dry crusts in the well by the road-side, presents to us a perfect picture of human felicity.

W. H.

No. XXXV.

ON PATRIOTISM.—A FRAGMENT

PATRIOTISM, in modern times, and in great states, is and must be the creature of reason and reflection, rather than the offspring of physical or local attachment. Our country is a complex, abstract existence, recognised only by the understanding. It is an immense riddle, containing numberless modifications of reason and prejudice, of thought and passion. Patriotism is not, in a strict or exclusive sense, a natural or personal affection, but a law of our rational and moral nature, strengthened and determined by particular circumstances and associations, but not born of them, nor wholly nourished by them. It is not possible that we should have an individual attachment to sixteen millions of men, any more than to sixty millions. We cannot be *habitually* attached to places we never saw, and people we never heard of. Is not the name of Englishmen a general term, as well as that of man? How many varieties does it not combine within it? Are the opposite extremities of the globe our native place, because they are a part of that geographical and political denomination, our country? Does natural affection expand in circles of latitude and longitude? What per-

sonal or instinctive sympathy has the English peasant with the African slave-driver, or East India Nabob? Some of our wretched bunglers in metaphysics would fain persuade us to discard all general humanity, and all sense of abstract justice, as a violation of natural affection, and yet do not see that the love of our country itself is in the list of our general affections. The common notions of patriotism are transmitted down to us from the savage tribes, where the fate and condition of all was the same, or from the states of Greece and Rome, where the country of the citizen was the town in which he was born. Where this is no longer the case,—where our country is no longer contained within the narrow circle of the same walls,—where we can no longer behold its glimmering horizon from the top of our native mountains—beyond these limits, it is not a natural but an artificial idea, and our love of it either a deliberate dictate of reason, or a cant term. It was said by an acute observer and eloquent writer (Rousseau) that the love of mankind was nothing but the love of justice: the same might be said, with considerable truth, of the love of our country. It is little more than another name for the love of liberty, of independence, of peace, and social happiness. We do not say that other indirect and collateral circumstances do not go to the superstructure of this senti-

ment (as language,* literature, manners, national customs), but this is the broad and firm basis.

No. XXXVI.

ON THE SCOTCH CHARACTER.—A FRAGMENT.

THE Scotch nation are a body-corporate. They hang together like a swarm of bees. We do not know how it may be among themselves, but with us they are all united as one man. They are not straggling individuals, but embodied, formidable abstractions—determined personifications of the land they come from. A Scotchman gets on in the world, because he is not one, but many. He moves in himself a host, drawn up in battle-array, and armed at all points against all impugners. He is a double existence—he stands for himself and his country. Every Scotchman is bond and surety for every other Scotchman—he thinks nothing Scotch foreign to him. If you see a Scotchman in the street, you may be almost sure it is another Scotchman he is arm-in-arm with; and, what is more, you may be sure they are talking of

* He who speaks two languages has no country. The French, when they made their language the common language of the Courts of Europe, gained more than by all their subsequent conquests.

Scotchmen. Begin at the Arctic Circle, and they take Scotland in their way back. Plant the foot of the compasses in the meridian, and they turn it by degrees to "Edina's darling seat"—true as the needle to the Pole. If you happen to say it is a high wind, they say there are high winds in Edinburgh. Should you mention Hampstead or Highgate, they smile at this as a local prejudice, and remind you of the Calton Hill. The conversation wanders and is impertinent, unless it hangs by this loop. It "runs the great circle, and is still at home." You would think there was no other place in the world but Scotland, but that they strive to convince you at every turn of its superiority to all other places. Nothing goes down but Scotch Magazines and Reviews, Scotch airs, Scotch bravery, Scotch hospitality, Scotch novels, and Scotch logic. Some one the other day at a literary dinner in Scotland apologized for alluding to the name of Shakspeare so often, because he was not a Scotchman. What a blessing that the Duke of Wellington was not a Scotchman, or we should never have heard the last of him! Even Sir Walter Scott, we understand, talks of the Scotch Novels in all companies; and by waving the title of the author, is at liberty to repeat the subject *ad infinitum*.

Lismahago, in Smollett, is a striking and laughable picture of this national propensity. He maintained with good discretion and method

that oat-cakes were better than wheaten bread, and that the air in the old town of Edinburgh was sweet and salubrious. He was a favourable specimen of the class—acute though pertinacious, pleasant but wrong.* In general, his countrymen only plod on with the national character fastened behind them, looking round with wary eye and warning voice to those who would pick out a single article of their precious charge; and are as drawling and troublesome as if they were hired by the hour to disclaim and exemplify all the vices of which they stand accused. Is this repulsive egotism peculiar to them merely in their travelling capacity, when they have to make their way among strangers, and are jealous of the honour of the parent-country, on which they have so ungraciously turned their backs? So Lord Erskine, after an absence of fifty years, made an appropriate eulogy on the place of his birth, and having traced the feeling of patriotism in himself to its source in that habitual attachment which all wandering tribes have to their places of fixed residence, turned his horses' heads towards England—and farewell sentiment!

The Irish and others who come and stay among us, however full they may be of the same

* Some persons have asserted that the Scotch have no humour. It is in vain to set up this plea, since Smollett was a Scotchman.

prejudice, keep it, in a great measure, to themselves, and do not vent it in all companies and on all occasions, proper or improper. The natives of the sister kingdom, in particular, rather cut their country, like a poor relation, are shy of being seen in one another's company, and try to soften down the *brogue* into a natural gentility of expression. A Scotchman, on the contrary, is never easy but when his favorite subject is started, treats it with unqualified breadth of accent, and seems assured that every one else must be as fond of talking of Scotland and Scotchmen as he is.

Is it a relic of the ancient system of *clanship*? And are the Scotch pitted against all the rest of the world, on the same principle that they formerly herded and banded together under some chosen leader, and *harried* the neighbouring district? This seems to be the most likely solution. A feeling of antipathy and partisanship, of offensive and defensive warfare, may be considered as necessary to the mind of a Scotchman. He is nothing in himself but as he is opposed to, or in league with, others. He must be for or against somebody. He must have a cause to fight for; a point to carry in argument. He is not an unit, but an aggregate; he is not a link, but a chain. He belongs to a regiment. I should hardly call a Scotchman *conceited*, though there is often something that borders strongly on the appearance of it. He has (speaking in the lump)

no personal or individual pretensions. He is not proud of himself, but of being a Scotchman. He has no existence or excellence except what he derives from some external accident, or shares with some body of men. He is a Brunonian, a Cameronian, a Jacobite, a Covenanter ; he is of some party, he espouses some creed, he is great in some controversy, he was bred in some University, has attended a certain course of lectures, understands Gaelic, and, upon occasion, wears the Highland dress. An Englishman is satisfied with the character of his country, and proceeds to set up for himself ; an Irishman despairs of that of his, and leaves it to shift for itself ; a Scotchman pretends to respectability as such, and owes it to his country to make you hate the very name by his ceaseless importunity and intolerance in its behalf. An Irishman is mostly vain of his person, an Englishman of his understanding, a Frenchman of his politeness—a Scotchman thanks God for the place of his birth. The face of a Scotchman is to him, accordingly, the face of a friend. It is enough for him to let you know that he speaks the dialect that Wilkie speaks, that he has sat in company with the Author of *Waverley*. He does not endeavour to put forward his own notions so much as to inform you of the school in politics, in morals, in physic, in which he is an adept ; nor does he attempt to overpower you by wit, by reason, by eloquence, but to tire you out by dint of verbal

logic; and in common-places it must be confessed that he is invincible. There he is *teres et rotundus*. He fortifies himself in these, circumvallation within circumvallation, till his stronghold is impregnable by art and nature. We never knew a Scotchman give up an argument but once. It was a very learned man, the Editor of an Encyclopedia,—not our friend, Mr. Macvey Napier. On some one's proposing the question why Greek should not be printed in the Roman type, this gentleman answered that in that case it would be impossible to distinguish the two languages. Every one stared, and it was asked how at this rate we distinguished French from English? It was the forlorn hope. Any one else would have laughed, and confessed the blunder. But the Editor was a grave man—made an obstinate defence (the best his situation allowed of) and yielded in the forms and with the honours of war.

A Scotchman is generally a dealer in staple propositions, and not in rarities and curiosities of the understanding. He does not like an idea the worse for its coming to him from a reputable, well-authenticated source, as we conceive he might feel more respect for a son of Burns than for Burns himself, on the same hereditary or genealogical principle. He swears (of course) by the Edinburgh Review, and thinks Blackwood not easily put down. He takes the word of a Professor in the University-chair in a

point of philosophy as he formerly took the Laird's word in a matter of life and death ; and has the names of the Stewarts, the Mills, the Jeffreys, in his mouth, instead of the Montroses, the Gordons, and the Macullamores. He follows in a train ; he enlists under some standard ; he comes under some collateral description. He is of the tribe of Issachar, and not of Judah. He stickles for no higher distinction than that of his clan, or vicinage.* In a word, the Scotch are the creatures of inveterate habit. They pin their faith on example and authority. All their ideas are cast in a previous mould, and rivetted to those of others. It is not a single blow, but a repetition of blows, that leaves an impression on them. They are strong only in the strength of prejudice and numbers. The genius of their greatest living writer is the genius of national tradition. He has “damnable iteration in him ;” but hardly one grain of sheer invention. His mind is turned instinctively backward on the past—he cannot project it forward to the future. He has not the faculty of

* This may be in part the reason of the blunder they have made in laying so much stress on what they call the *Cockney School in Poetry*—as if the people in London were proud of that distinction, and really thought it a particular honour to get their living in the metropolis, as the Scottish “Kernes and Gallowglasses” think it a wonderful step in their progress through life to be able to hire a lodging and to pay *scot and lot* in the good town of Edinburgh.

imagining any thing, either in individual or general truth, different from what has been handed down to him for such. Give him *costume*, dialect, manners, popular superstitions, grotesque characters, supernatural events, and local scenery, and he is a prodigy, a man-monster among writers—take these actually embodied and endless materials from him, and he is a common man, with as little original power of mind as he has (unfortunately) independence or boldness of spirit !

The Scotch, with all their mechanical, wholesale attachment to names and parties, are venal in politics,* and cowardly in friendship. They crouch to power ; and would be more disposed to fall upon and crush, than come forward to the support of, a sinking individual. They are not like *La Fleur* in the *Sentimental Journey*, who advanced three steps forward to his master when the *Gens-d' Armes* arrested him : they are like the *Maître d'Hotel*, who retired three paces backwards on the same occasion. They will support a generic denomination, where they have numbers to support them again : they make a great gulp, and swallow down a feudal lord with all the retinue he can muster—*the more, the merrier*—but of a single unprotected straggler

* It was not always so. But by knocking on the head the Jacobite Loyalty of the Scotch, their political integrity of principle has been destroyed and dissipated to all the winds of Heaven.

they are shy, jealous, scrupulous in the extreme as to character, inquisitive as to connections, curious in all the particulars of birth, parentage and education. Setting his prejudices of country, religion, or party aside, you have no hold of a Scotchman but by his self-interest. If it is for his credit or advantage to stand by you, he will do it: otherwise, it will go very much against both his stomach and his conscience to do so, and you must e'en shift for yourself. You may trust something to the generosity or magnanimity of an Englishman or an Irishman; they act from an impulse of the blood or from a sense of justice: a Scotchman (the exceptions are splendid indeed) uniformly calculates the consequences to himself. He is naturally faithful to a leader, as we said before, that is, to a powerful head; but his fidelity amounts to little more than servility. He is a bigot to the shadow of power and authority, a slave to prejudice and custom, and a coward in every thing else. He has not a particle of mental courage. Cæsar's wife was not to be suspected; and it is the same with a Scotchman's friend. If a word is said against your moral character, they shun you like a plague-spot. They are not only afraid of a charge being proved true against you, but they dare not disprove it, lest by clearing you of it they should be supposed a party to what had no existence or foundation. They thus imbibe a bad opinion of you from hearsay, and conceal

the good they know of you both from themselves and the world. If your political orthodoxy is called in question, they take the alarm as much as if we were apprehensive of being involved in a charge of high treason. One would think that the whole country laboured as they did **SIXTY YEARS SINCE**, under an imputation of disaffection, and were exposed to the utmost vigilance of the police, so that each person had too little character for loyalty himself to run any additional risk by his neighbour's bad name. This is not the case at present: but they carry their precautions and circumspection in this respect to such an idle and stupid excess as can only be accounted for from local circumstances and history—that is to say, from the effects of that long system of suspicion, persecution and *surveillance*, to which they were exposed during a century of ridiculous (at least of unsuccessful) wars and rebellions, in favour of the House of Stuart. They suffered much for King James and the *Good Cause*; but since that time their self-love must be excused to look at home. On our once complaining to a Scotchman of what we thought a direction of his client's cause by the counsel for the defendant in a prosecution for libel, we received for answer—That “Mr. —— had defended the accused as far as he could, *consistently with his character*,”—though the only character the Learned Gentleman could boast had been acquired by his skill, if not his courage, in resisting prosecutions of this kind.

The delicate sensibility (not to say soreness) of the Scotch in matters of moral reputation, may in like manner be accounted for (indirectly) from their domiciliary system of church-government, of Kirk-assemblies, and Ruling Elders: and in the unprincipled assurance with which aspersions of this sort are thrown out, and the panic-terror which they strike into the timid or hypocritical, one may see the remaining effects of Penance-Sheets and Cutty-Stools ! Poor Burns ! he called up the ghost of Dr. Hornbook, but did not lay the spirit of cant and lying in the cunning North !——

Something, however, it must be confessed, has been done ; a change has been effected. Extremes meet ; and the Saint has been (in some instances) merged in the Sinner. The essential character of the Scotch is determined self-will, the driving at a purpose; so that whatever they undertake, they make thorough-stitch work, and carry as far as it will go. This is the case in the pretensions some of their writers have lately set up to a contempt for Cutty-Stools and to all the freedom of wit and humour. They have been so long under interdict that they break out with double violence, and stop at nothing. Of all *blackguards* (we use the term for want of any other) a Scotch blackguard is for this reason the worst. First, the character sits ill upon him for want of use, and is sure to be most outrageously caricatured. He is only

just broke loose from the shackles of regularity and restraint, and is forced to play strange antics to be convinced that they are not still clinging to his heels. Secondly, formality, hypocrisy, and a deference to opinion, are the "sins that most easily beset him." When therefore he has once made up his mind to disregard appearances, he becomes totally reckless of character, and "at one bound high overleaps all bound" of decency and common sense. Again, there is perhaps a natural hardness and want of nervous sensibility about the Scotch, which renders them (rules and the consideration of consequences apart) not very nice or scrupulous in their proceedings. If they are not withheld by conscience or prudence, they have no *mauvaise honte*, no involuntary qualms or tremors, to qualify their effrontery and disregard of principle.— Their impudence is extreme, their malice is cold-blooded, covert, crawling, deliberate, without the frailty or excuse of passion. They club their vices and their venality together, and by the help of both united are invincible. The choice spirits who have lately figured in a much-talked - of publication, with "old Sylvanus at their head,"—

" Leaning on cypress stadle stout,"—

in their "pious orgies" resemble a troop of Yahoos, or a herd of Satyrs—

" And with their horned feet they beat the ground!"

that is to say, the door of Mr. Blackwood's shop! There is one other publication, a match for this in flagrant impudence and dauntless dastardly, which is the *John Bull*. The Editor is supposed, for the honour of Scotland, to be an Irishman. When the *Bacon* might have proved, there is no saying; but it would have been curious to have seen some articles of Sir Walter's undoubted hand proceeding from this quarter, as it has been always contended that Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine was too low and scurrilous a publication for him to have any share in it. The adventure of the *Bacon* has perhaps discovered to Sir Walter's admirers and the friends of humanity in general, that

“ Entire infidelity beareth nicer hands.”

Old Dr. Burney, about the middle of the last century, called one morning on Thomson, the Author of *The Seasons*, at a late hour, and on expressing his surprise at the poet's not having risen sooner, received for answer,—"I had no motive, young man!" A Scotchman acts always from a motive, and on due consideration; and if he does not act right or with a view to honest ends, is more dangerous than any one else. Others may plead the tides of their blood in extenuation of their errors; but a Scotchman is a machine, and should be constructed on sound moral and philosophical principles, or should be put a stop to altogether.

No. XXXVII.

ARGUING IN A CIRCLE.

THERE was an account in the newspapers the other day of a fracas in the street, in which a Lord and one or two Members of Parliament were concerned. It availed them nought to plead the privilege of Peerage, or to have made speeches in the House — they were held to bail, like the vilest of the rabble, and the circumstance was not considered a very creditable one to come before the public. Ah ! it is that public that is the sad thing. It is the most tremendous ring that was ever formed to see fair play between man and man ; it puts people on their good behaviour immediately ; and wherever it exists, there is an end of the airs and graces which individuals, high in rank, and low in understanding and morals, may choose to give themselves. While the affair is private, and can be kept in a corner, personal fear and favour are the ruling principles—*might* prevails over *right* : but bring it before the world, and truth and justice stand some chance. The public is too large a body to be bribed or browbeaten. Its voice, deep and loud, quails the heart of princes : its breath would make the feather in a lord's cap bend and cower before it, if its glance, measuring the real magnitude of such persons with their lofty,

tiptoe, flaunting pretensions, had not long since taken the feathers out of their caps. A lord is now dressed (oh! degenerate world) like any other man; and a watchman will no sooner let go his grasp of his plain collar than he will that of a Commoner, or any other man, who has his "fancies and good-nights." What a falling off is here from the time when, if a "base cullionly fellow" had dared to lay hands on a nobleman, on "one of quality," he would have whipped his sword out of its scabbard, and run him through the body; the "beggarly, unmannered corse" would have been thrown into the Thames, or the next ditch; and woe to any person that should have attempted to make a stir in the matter! "The age of chivalry is gone; that of constables, legislators, and Grub-street writers, has succeeded, and the glory of heraldry is extinguished for ever."

"The melancholy Jacques grieves at that."

Poor Sir Walter! the times are changed indeed since a Duke of Buckingham could send a couple of bullies, equipped in his livery, with swords and ribbons, to carry off a young lady from a Peveril of the Peak, by main force, in the face of day, and yet the bystanders not dare to interfere, from a dread of the Duke's livery and the High Court of Star Chamber! It is no wonder that the present Duke of Buckingham (the old title new revived) makes speeches in the Upper

House to prove that legitimate monarchs have a right, whenever they please, to run their swords through the heart of a nation, and *pink* the liberties of mankind; thinking, if this doctrine were once fully restored, the old times of his predecessor might come again,—

“ New manners and the pomp of elder days !”

It is in tracing the history of private manners that we see (more than by any thing else) the progress that has been made in public opinion and political liberty, and that may be still farther made. No one individual now sets up his will as higher than the law: no noble duke or baron bold acts the professed bully, or glories in the character of a lawless ruffian, as a part of the etiquette and privileges of high rank: no gay, gaudy minion of the court takes the wall of the passengers, sword in hand, cuts a throat, washes his white, crimson-spotted hands, and then to dinner with the king and the ladies.—*That* is over with us at present; and while that is the case, Hampden will not have bled in the field, nor Sydney on the scaffold, in vain! Even the monarch in this country, though he is above the law, is subject to opinion; “ submits,” as Mr. Burke has it, “ both from choice and necessity, to the soft collar of social esteem, and gives a domination, vanquisher of laws, to be subdued by manners !”

It is this which drives the Despots of the

Continent mad, and makes their nobles and chief vassals league together like a herd of tigers, to destroy the example of liberty which we (the people of England) have set to the rest of the world. They are afraid that if this example should spread and things go on much farther in the road they have taken, they will no longer be able to give their subjects and dependants the *knout*, to send them to the galleys or a dungeon without any warrant but their own unbridled will, and that a lord or a king will be no more above the law than any other man. Mankind, in short, till lately, and except in this country, were considered as a herd of deer which the privileged classes were to use for their pleasure, or which they were to hunt down for spite or sport, as liked them best. That they should combine together with a knot of obscure philosophers and hair-brained philanthropists, to set up a plea not to be used at any man's pleasure, or hunted down like vermin for any man's sport, was an insult to be avenged with seas of blood, an attack upon the foundations of social order, and the very existence of all law, religion, and morality. In all the legitimate governments of Europe there existed, and there still exist, a number of individuals who were exempted (by birth and title) from the law, who could offer every affront to religion, and commit every outrage upon morality, with impunity, with insolence and loud laughter, and who pretended that in asserting

this monstrous privilege of theirs to the very letter, the essence of all law, religion, and morality consisted. This was the case in France till the year 1789. The only law was the will of the rich to insult and harass the poor, the only religion a superstitious mummery, the only morality subserviency to the pleasures of the great. In the mild reign of Louis XV. only, there were fifteen thousand *lettres de cachet* issued for a number of private, nameless offences, such as the withholding a wife or a daughter from the embraces of some man of rank, for having formerly received favours from a king's mistress, or writing an epigram on a Minister of State. It was on the ruins of this flagitious system (no less despicable than detestable) that the French Revolution rose ; and the towers of the Bastille, as they fell, announced the proud truth in welcome thunder to the human race—to all but those who thought they were born, and who only wished to live, to exercise their sweeping, wholesale, ruthless tyranny, or to vent the workings of their petty rankling spleen, pride, bigotry, and malice, in endless tormenting detail on their fellow-creatures.

It will, we conceive, hereafter be considered as the greatest enormity in history, the stupidest and most bare-faced insult that ever was practised on the understandings or the rights of men, that we should interfere in this quarrel between liberty and slavery, take the wrong side, and en-

deavour to suppress the natural consequences of that very example of freedom we had set. That we should do this, we who had "long insulted the slavery of Europe by the loudness of our boasts of freedom," who had laughed at the *Grand Monarque* for the last hundred and fifty years, and treated his subjects with every indig-
nity, as belonging to an inferior species to ourselves, for submitting to his cruel and enervated sway; that the instant they took us at our word and were willing to break the chains of Popery and Slavery that we never ceased to taunt them with, we should turn against them, stand passive by "with jealous leer malign," witnessing the machinations of despots to exting-
uish the rising liberties of the world, and with the first plausible pretext, the first watch-
word given (the blow aimed at the head of a king confederate with the enemies of his country against its freedom) should join the warwhoop, and continue it loudest and longest, and never rest, under one hollow, dastard, loathsome pre-
tence or other, till we had put down "the last example of democratic rebellion" (we, who are nothing but rebellion all over, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot!) and had restored the doctrine of Divine Right, that had fallen headless from its throne of Ignorance and Superstition with the First Charles, long before it was condemned to the same fate in the person of the French king; that we

should do this, and be led, urged on to the unhallowed task by a descendant of the House of Brunswick, who held his crown in contempt of the Stuarts, and grew old, blind, and crazed in the unsated, undiverted, sacred thirst of Legitimacy, is a thing that posterity will wonder at. We pretend to have interfered to put down the horrors of the French Revolution, when 't was our interference (with that of others) that produced those horrors, of which we were glad as an excuse to justify our crooked policy and to screen the insidious, deadly, fatal blow aimed at liberty. No ; the "cause was hearted" in the breasts of those who reign, or who would reign, in contempt of the people, and with whom it rests to make peace or war. Is not the same principle at work still? What horrors have the *Holy Alliance* to plead in vindication of their interference with Spain? They have not a rag, a thread, of all their hideous tissue of sophistry and lies to cover "the open and apparent shame" of this sequel and consistent comment on their former conduct. It is a naked, barefaced, undisguised attack upon the rights and liberties of the world: it is putting the thing upon its true and proper footing—the claim of Kings to hold mankind as a property in perpetuity. There are no horrors, real or pretended, to warrant this new outrage on common sense and human nature. It stands on its own proud basis of injustice—it towers and mocks the skies in all

the majesty of regal wrong. "The shame, the blood be upon their heads." If there are no horrors ready-made to their hands, they stand upon their privilege to commit wanton outrage and unqualified aggression ; and if by these means they can provoke horrors, then the last are put first, as the most plausible plea, as a handsome mask and soft lining to the hard gripe and features of Legitimacy—Religion consecrates, and Loyalty sanctions the fraud !—But, should the scheme fail, in spite of every art and effort, and the wrong they have meditated be retorted on their own heads, then we shall have, as before, an appeal made to Liberty and Humanity—the motto of despots will once more be *peace on earth and good-will to men*—and we too shall join in the yell of blood and the whine of humanity. We are only waiting for an excuse now — till the threats, and insults, and cruelties of insolent invaders call forth reprisals, and lead to some act of popular fury or national justice that shall serve as a signal to rouse the torpid spirit of trade in the city, or to inflame the loyalty of country gentlemen, deaf for the present to all other sounds but that appalling one of RENT ! We must remain neuter while a grievous wrong is acting, unless we can get something by the change, or pick a quarrel with the right. We are peaceable, politic, when a nation's liberty only is at stake, but were it a monarch's crown that hung tottering in the air,

oh ! how soon would a patriot senate and people start out to avenge the idle cause : a single speech from the throne would metamorphose us into martyrs of self-interest, saviours of the world, deliverers of Europe from lawless violence and unexampled wrong. But here we have no heart to stir, because the name of liberty alone (without the cant of loyalty) has lost its magic charm on the ears of Englishmen—impotent to save, powerful only to betray and destroy themselves and others !

We want a Burke to give the thing a legitimate turn at present. They could hardly have done before without that eloquent apostate, that brilliant sophist, to throw his pen into the scale against truth and liberty. He varnished over a bad cause with smooth words, and had power to “make the worse appear the better reason”—the devil’s boast ! The madness of genius was necessary to second the madness of a court ; his flaming imagination was the torch that kindled the smouldering fire in the inmost sanctuary of pride and power, and spread havoc, dismay, and desolation through the world. The light of his imagination, sportive, dazzling, beauteous as it seemed, was followed by the stroke of death. It so happens that we ourselves have played all our life with his forked shafts unhurt, because we had a metaphysical clue to carry off the noxious particles, and let them sink into the earth, like drops of water. But the English

nation are not a nation of metaphysicians, or they would have detected, and smiled or wept over, the glittering fallacies of this half-bred reasoner, but, at the same time, most accomplished rhetorician that the world ever saw.— But they are perplexed by sophistry, stupefied by prejudice, staggered by authority. In the way of common sense and practical inquiry, they do well enough ; but start a paradox, and they know not what to make of it. They either turn from it altogether, or, if interest or fear give them motives to attend to it, are fascinated by it. They cannot analyze or separate the true from the *seeming* good. Mr. Pitt, with his deep-mouthing *common-places*, was able to follow in the same track, and fill up the cry ; but he could not have given the tone to political feeling, or led on the chase with “ so musical a discord, such sweet thunder.” Burke strewed the flowers of his style over the rotten carcase of corruption, and embalmed it in immortal prose : he contrived, by the force of artful invective and misapplied epithets, to persuade the people of England that Liberty was an illiberal, hollow sound ; that humanity was a barbarous modern invention, that prejudices were the test of truth, that reason was a strumpet, and right a fiction. Every other view of the subject but his (“ so well the tempter glazed ”) seemed to be without attraction, elegance, or refinement. Politics became poetry in his hands, his sayings passed

like proverbs from mouth to mouth, and his descriptions and similes were admired and repeated by the fashionable and the fair. Liberty thenceforward became a low thing: philosophy was a spring-nailed, velvet-pawed tiger-cat, with green eyes, watching its opportunity to dart upon its prey: humanity was a lurking assassin. The emblems of our cardinal and favourite virtues were overturned: the whole vocabulary of national watch-words was inverted or displaced. This was a change indeed in our style of thinking, more alarming than that in our calendar formerly: and this change was brought about by Mr. Burke, who softened down hard reasons in the crucibles of his fancy, and who gave to his epithets the force of nick-names. Half the business was done by his description of the Queen of France. It was an appeal to all women of quality; to all who were, or would be thought, cavaliers or men of honour; to all who were admirers of beauty, or rank, or sex. Yet what it had to do with the question, it would be difficult to say. If a woman is handsome, it is well: but it is no reason why she should poison her husband, or betray a country. If, instead of being young, beautiful, and free of manners, Marie Antoinette had been old, ugly, and chaste, all this mischief had been prevented. The author of the *Reflections* had seen or dreamt he saw a most delightful vision sixteen years before, which had thrown his brain into a ferment;

and he was determined to throw his readers and the world into one too. It was a theme for a copy of verses, or a romance; not for a work in which the destinies of mankind were to be weighed. Yet she was the Helen that opened another Iliad of woes; and the world has paid for that accursed glance at youthful beauty with rivers of blood. If there was any one of sufficient genius now to deck out some Castilian maid, or village girl, in the Army of the Faith, in all the colours of fancy, to reflect her image in a thousand ages and hearts, making a saint and a martyr of her; turning loyalty into religion, and the rights and liberties of the Spanish nation, and of all other nations, into a mockery, a bye-word, and a bugbear, how soon would an end be put to Mr. Canning's present *bizarre* (almost afraid to know itself) situation! How gladly he would turn round on the pivot of his forced neutrality, and put all his drooping tropes and figures on their splendid war-establishment again!

Mr. Burke was much of a theatrical man. We do not mean that his high-wrought enthusiasm or vehemence was not natural to him; but the direction that he gave to it was exceedingly capricious and arbitrary. It was for some time a doubtful question which way he should turn with respect to the French Revolution, whether for or against it. His pride took the alarm, that so much had been done with which he had

nothing to do, and that a great empire had been overturned with his favourite engines, wit and eloquence, while he had been reforming the “turn-spit of the king’s kitchen,” in set speeches far superior to the occasion. Rousseau and the Encyclopædists had lamentably got the start of him ; and he was resolved to drag them back somehow by the heels, and bring what they had effected to an untimely end,—

“ Undoing all, as all had never been.”

The “Reflections on the French Revolution” was a spiteful and dastard, but too successful, attempt to *put a spoke in the wheels* of knowledge and progressive civilization, and throw them back for a century and a half at least. In viewing the change in the prospects of society, in producing which he had only a slight and indirect hand by his efforts in the cause of American freedom, he seemed to say, with Iago in the play :—

“ Though that their joy be joy,
Yet will I contrive
To throw such changes of vexations on it
As it may lose some colour.”

He went beyond his own most sanguine hopes, but did not live to witness their final accomplishment, by seeing France literally “blotted out of the map of Europe.” He died in the most brilliant part of Buonaparte’s victorious and captain-like campaigns in Italy. If it could have been

foreseen what an “ugly customer” he was likely to prove, the way would have been to have bribed his vanity (a great deal stronger than his interest) over to the other side, by asking his opinion ; and, indeed, he has thrown out pretty broad hints in the early stage of his hostility, and before the unexpected success of the French arms, and the whizzing arrows flung at him by his old friends and new antagonists had stung him to madness, that the great error of the National Assembly was in not having consulted able and experienced heads on this side of the water, as to demolishing the old, and constructing the new, edifice. If he had been employed to lay the first stone, or to assist, by an inaugural dissertation, at the baptism of the new French Constitution, the fabric of the Revolution would thenceforth have risen,—

“ Like an exhalation of rich distilled perfumes,”

without let or molestation from his tongue or pen. But he was overlooked. He was not called from his closet or from his place in the House (where, it must be confessed, he was out of his place) to “ ride in the whirlwind and direct the storm ;” and therefore he tried, like some malicious hag, to urge the veering gale into a hurricane ; to dash the labouring vessel of the state in pieces, and make shipwreck of the eternal jewel of man’s happiness, which it had on board—Liberty. The stores of practical

and speculative knowledge which he had been for years collecting and digesting, and for which he had no use at home, were not called into play abroad. His genius had hitherto been always too mighty for the occasion ; but here his utmost grasp of intellect would hardly have been sufficient to grapple with it. What an opportunity was lost ! Something, therefore, was to be done, to relieve the galling sense of disappointed ambition and mortified self-consequence. Our political *Busy-body* turned *Marplot* ; and maliciously, and like a felon, strangled the babe that he was not professionally called in to swaddle, and dandle, and bring to maturity. He had his revenge : but so must others have theirs on his memory.

Burke was not an honest man. There was always a *dash* of insincerity, a sinister bias in his disposition. We see from the letters that passed between him and his two brothers, and Barry the painter, that there was constantly a balancing of self-interest and principle in his mind ; a thanking of God that he was in no danger of yielding to temptation, yet as if it were a doubtful or ticklish point ; and a patient, pensive expectation of place or emolument, till he could reconcile it with integrity and fidelity to his party ; which might easily be construed into a querulous hankering after it, and an opinion that this temporary self-denial implied a considerable sacrifice on his part, or that he displayed no small share of vir-

tue in not immediately turning knave. All this, if narrowly looked into, has a very suspicious appearance. Burke, with all his capricious wildness and flighty impulses, was a self-seeker and more constant in his enmities than in his friendships. He bore malice, and did not forgive to the last. His cold, sullen behaviour to Fox, who shed tears when they had a quarrel in the House, and his refusal to see him afterwards, when the latter came to visit him on his death-bed, will for ever remain a stigma on his memory. He was, however, punished for his fault. In his latter writings, he complains bitterly of the solitariness of his old age, and of the absence of the friends of his youth—whom he had deserted. This is natural justice, and the tribute due to apostacy. A man may carry over his own conscience to the side of his vanity or interest, but he cannot expect, at the same time, to carry over along with him all those with whom he has been connected in thought or action, and whose society he will miss, sooner or later. Mr. Burke could hardly hope to find, in his casual, awkward, unaccountable intercourse with such men as Pitt or Dundas, amends for the loss of his old friends Fox and Sheridan, to whom he was knit, not only by political ties, but by old habitudes, lengthened recollections, and a variety of common studies and pursuits. Pitt was a mere politician; Dundas a mere worldling. What would they care about him, and his “winged

words?" *No more of talk* about the meetings at Sir Joshua's—the *Noctes cœnæque Deūm*; about the fine portraits of that great colourist; about Johnson or Goldsmith, or Dunning or Barré; or their early speeches; or the trying times in the beginning of the American war; or the classic taste and free-born spirit of Greece and Rome;—

"The beautiful was vanish'd, and return'd not."

Perhaps, indeed, he would wish to forget most of these as ungrateful topics; but when a man seeks for repose in oblivion of himself, he had better seek it, where he will soonest find it,—in the grave! Whatever the talents, or the momentary coincidence of opinion of his new allies, there would be a want of previous sympathy between them. Their notions would not amalgamate, or they would not be sure that they did. Everything would require to be explained, to be reconciled. There would be none of the freedom of habitual intimacy. Friendship, like the clothes we wear, becomes the easier from custom. New friendships do not sit well on old or middle age. Affection is a science to which it is too late to serve an apprenticeship after a certain period of life. This is the case with all patched-up, conventional intimacies; but it is worse when they are built on inveterate hostility and desertion from an opposite party, where their naturally crude taste is embittered by

jealousy and rankling wounds. We think to exchange old friends and connections for new ones, and to be received with an additional welcome for the sacrifice we have made ; but we gain nothing by it but the contempt of those whom we have left, and the suspicions of those whom we have joined. By betraying a cause, and turning our backs on a principle, we forfeit the esteem of the honest, and do not inspire one particle of confidence or respect in those who may profit by, and pay us for, our treachery.

Deserters are never implicitly trusted. There is, besides the sentiment or general principle of their thing, a practical reason for this. Their zeal, their eagerness to distinguish themselves in their new career, makes them rash and extravagant ; and not only so, but there is always a leaven of their old principles remaining behind, which breaks out in spite of themselves, and which it is difficult for their encouragers and patrons to guard against. This was remarkably the case with the late Mr. Windham. He was constantly *running-a-muck* at some question or other, and committing the Ministers. His old, free-thinking, Opposition habits returned upon him before he was aware of it ; and he was sure to hazard some paradox, or stickle for some objectionable point, contrary to the forms of office. The Cabinet had contemplated no such thing. He was accordingly kept in check, and alarmed the treasury-bench whenever he rose.

He was like a dog that gives mouth before the time, or is continually running on a stray scent: he was chid and fed! The same thing is observable in the present Poet-Laureate, whose jacobinical principles have taken such deep root in him, (*intus et in cute*) that they break out, even in his Court poems, like “a thick scurf” on loyalty; and he presents them, unconsciously, as an offering of “sweet-smelling gums,” at the very foot of the throne. He at present retains his place apparently on condition of holding his tongue. He writes such Odes on kings that it is next to impossible not to travestie them into lampoons!

The remarks we have made above apply strongly to him and some of his associates of the *Lake School*. We fancy he has felt, as much as any one, the inconvenience of drawing off from a cause, and that, by so doing, we leave our oldest and our best friends behind. There are those among the favourers and admirers of his youth whom his dim eyes discover not, and who do not count his grey hairs. Not one or two, but more;—men of character and understanding, who had pledged mutual faith, and drank the cup of freedom with him, warm from the wine-press, as well as the “dews of Castilie.” He gave up a principle, and one left him;—he insulted a feeling, and another fled;—he accepted a place, and received the congratulations of no one but Mr. Croker. He looks round for

them in vain, with throbbing heart, (the heart of a poet can never lie still; he should take the more care what it is that agitates it!)—sees only the shadows or the carcases of old friendships; or stretches out his hand to grasp some new patron, and finds that also cold. If our friends are sometimes accused of short memories, our enemies make it up by having long ones. We had better adhere to the first; for we must despair of making cordial converts of the last. This double desolation is cheerless, and makes a man bethink himself. We may make a shift (a shabby one) without our self-respect; but it will never do to have it followed by the loss of those whose opinion we once valued most. We may tamper with our own consciences; but we feel at a loss without the testimony of others in our favour, which is seldom paid, except to integrity of purpose and principle. Perhaps, however, Mr. Southey consoles himself for a certain void, without and within, by receiving the compliments of some Under-graduate of either of our Universities, on his last article in defence of Rotten Boroughs, in the Quarterly Review; or of a Dignitary of the Church, on his share in the Six Acts, and for suggesting to Lord Sidmouth the propriety of punishing the second conviction for libel with banishment. We do not know how this may be: but with us it would barb the dart.

It would not matter if these turn-coats were

not in such violent extremes. Between the two, they must be strangely perplexed in their own minds, and scarcely know what to make of themselves. They must have singular qualms come over them at times—the apparitions of former acquaintance and opinions. If they were contented to correct, to qualify their youthful extravagances, and to be taught, by experience, to steer a middle course, and pay some deference to the conclusions of others, it would be mighty well; but this is not their humour. They must be conspicuous, dogmatical, exclusive, intolerant, on whichever side they are: the mode may be different, the principle is the same. A man's nature does not change, though he may profess different sentiments. A Socinian may become a Calvinist, or a Whig a Tory; but a bigot is always a bigot; an egotist never becomes humble. Besides, what excuse has a man, after thirty, to change about all of a sudden to the very opposite side? If he is an uneducated man, he may, indeed, plead ignorance yesterday of what he has learnt to-day: but a man of study and reading can't pretend that a whole host of arguments has suddenly burst upon him, of which he never heard before, and that they have upset all his earlier notions: he must have known them long before, and, if they made no impression on him then to modify his violent zeal (supposing them to be right now), it is a sign either of a disincli-

nation, or of an incapacity, on his part, to give truth a fair hearing — a bad ground to build his present dogmatical and infallible tone upon ! It is certain that the common sense of the world condemns these violent changes of opinion ; and if they do not prove that a man prefers his convenience to his virtue, they at least show that he prefers it to his reputation ; for he loses his character by them. An apostate is a name that all men abhor, that no man ever willingly acknowledges ; and the tergiversation which it denotes is not likely to come into much greater request till it is no longer observed that a man seldom changes his principles except for his interest ! Those who go over from the winning to the losing side do not incur this appellation ; and, however we may count them fools, they can't be called knaves into the bargain.

No. XXXVIII.

PULPIT ORATORY. DR. CHALMERS AND MR. IRVING.

THE Scotch at present seem to bear the bell, and to have "got the start of the majestic world." They boast of the greatest novelists, the greatest preachers, the greatest philanthropists, and the greatest blackguards in the world. Sir Walter Scott stands at the head of these for Scotch humour, Dr. Chalmers for Scotch logic, Mr.

Owen for Scotch Utopianism, and Mr. Blackwood for Scotch impudence. Unrivalled four ! Nay, here is Mr. Irving, who threatens to make a fifth, and *stultify* all our London orators, from "kingly Kensington" to Blackwall ! Who has not heard of him ? Who does not go to hear him ? You can scarcely move along for the coronet-coaches that besiege the entrance to the Caledonian chapel in Hatton-garden ; and when, after a prodigious squeeze, you get in so as to have standing-room, you see in the same undistinguished crowd Brougham and Mackintosh, Mr. Peel and Lord Liverpool, Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Coleridge. Mr. Canning and Mr. Hone are pew fellows, Mr. Waithman frowns stern applause, and Mr. Alderman Wood does the honours of the Meeting ! The lamb lies down with the lion, and the Millennium seems to be anticipated in the Caledonian chapel, under the new Scotch preacher. Lords, ladies, sceptics, fanatics, join in approbation,—some admire the doctrine, others the sound, some the picturesque appearance of the orator, others the grace of action, some the ingenuity of the argument, others the beauty of the style or the bursts of passion, some even go so far as to patronize a certain *brackish* infusion of the Scottish dialect, and a slight defect of vision. Lady Bluemount declares it to be only inferior to the **EXCURSION** in imagination, and Mr. Botherby cries—"Good,

good!" The "Talking Potato"^{*} and Mr. Theodore Flash have not yet been.

Mr. Irving appears to us the most accomplished barbarian, and the least offensive and most dashing clerical holder-forth we remember

* Some years ago, a periodical paper was published in London, under the title of the PIC-NIC. It was got up under the auspices of a Mr. Fulke Greville, and several writers of that day contributed to it, among whom were Mr. Horace Smith, Mr. Dubois, Mr. Prince Hoare, Mr. Cumberland, and others. On some dispute arising between the proprietor and the gentlemen-contributors on the subject of an advance in the remuneration for articles, Mr. Fulke Greville grew heroic, and said, "I have got a young fellow, just come from Ireland, who will undertake to do the whole, verse and prose, politics and scandal, for two guineas a week, and if you will come and sup with me to-morrow night, you shall see him, and judge whether I am not right in closing with him." Accordingly, they met the next evening, and the WRITER OF ALL WORK was introduced. He began to make a display of his native ignorance and impudence on all subjects immediately, and no one else had occasion to say any thing. When he was gone, Mr. Cumberland exclaimed, "A talking potato, by God!" The talking potato was Mr. Croker, of the Admiralty. Our adventurer shortly, however, returned to his own country, and passing accidentally through a town where they were in want of a ministerial candidate at an Election, the gentleman of modest assurance offered himself, and succeeded. "They wanted a Jack-pudding," said the father of the hopeful youth, "and so they chose my son." The case of the Duke of York and Mrs. Clarke soon after came on, and Mr. Croker, who is a dabbler in dirt, and an adept in love-letters, rose from the affair Secretary to the Admiralty, and the very "rose and expectancy of the fair State."

to have seen. He puts us in mind of the first man, Adam, if Adam had but been a Scotchman, and had coal black hair. He seems to stand up in the integrity of his composition, to begin a new race of practising believers, to give a new impulse to the Christian religion, to regenerate the fallen and degenerate race of man. You would say he had been turned out of the hands of Nature and the Schools a perfect piece of workmanship. See him in the street, he has the air, the free-swing, the *bold upright* figure of an Indian savage, or a northern borderer dressed in canonicals: set him in the pulpit, and he is armed with all the topics, a master of fence, the pupil of Dr. Chalmers! In action he has been compared to Kean; in the union of external and intellectual advantages, we might start a parallel for him in the admirable Crichton. He stands before Haydon's picture of Lazarus, and says, "Look at me!" He crosses Piccadilly, and clears Bond-street of its beaux! Rob Roy, Macbriar is come again. We saw him stretched on a bench at the Black Bull in Edinburgh,—we met him again at a thirteen-penny ordinary in London, in the same attitude, and said, without knowing his calling, or his ghostly parts, "That is the man for a fair saint." We swear it by

" His foot mercurial; his martial thigh;
The brawn of Hercules, but his jovial face!"

Aye, there we stop like Imogen—there is a want

of expression in it. "The iron has not entered his soul." He has not dared to feel but in trammels and in dread. He has read Werter but to criticise him; Rousseau, but to steel himself against him; Shakspeare, but to quote him; Milton, but to round his periods. Pleasure, fancy, humanity, are syrens that he repels and keeps at arms-length; and hence his features are hardened, and have a barbaric crust upon them. They are not steeped in the expression of Titian or Raphael; but they would do for Spagnoletti to paint, and his dark profile and matted locks have something of the grave commanding appearance of Leonardo da Vinci's massive portraits.

Dr. Chalmers is not so good-looking a man as Mr. Irving; he wants the same vigour and spirit. His face is dead and clammy, cold, pale, bloodless, passionless, and there is a glazed look of insincerity about the eyes, uninformed, uninspired from within. His voice is broken, harsh, and creaking, while Mr. Irving's is flowing and silvery: his Scotch accent and pronunciation are a terrible infliction on the *uncultivated* ear. His "Whech observation I oorge upon you, my frinds and breethren," desolates and lays waste all the humanities. He grinds out his sentences between his teeth, and catches at truth with his fists, as a monkey catches an apple or a stick thrown at him with his paws. He seems by his action and his utterance to say to difficulties,

“ Come, let me clutch ye,” and, having got them in his grasp, tears and rends them in pieces, as a dog tears an old rag to tatters or mumbles a stone that is flung in his way. Dr. Chalmers engages attention and secures sympathy solely by the intensity of his own purpose: there is neither eloquence nor wisdom, neither imagination nor feeling, neither the pomp of sound, nor grace, nor solemnity of manner about him ; but he is in earnest, and eager in pursuit of his argument, and arrests the eye and ear of his congregation by this alone. He dashes headforemost into the briars and thorns of controversy, and drags you along with him whether you will or no, and your only chance is to push on and get out of them as well as you can, though dreadfully scratched and almost blinded. He involves you in a labyrinth, and you are anxious to escape from it: you have to pass through many a dark, subterranean cavern with him in his theological ferry-boat, and are glad enough to get out on the other side, with the help of Scotch logic for oars, and Scotch rhetoric for sails ! You hear no *home* truths, nothing that touches the heart, or swells or expands the soul ; there is no tide of eloquence lifting you to Heaven, or wafting you from Indus to the Pole.—No, you are detained in a canal, with a great number of *locks* in it.—You make way by virtue of standing still, your will is irritated and impelled forward by stoppages—you are puzzled

into sympathy, pulled into admiration, tired into patience! The preacher starts a difficulty, of which you had no notion before, and you stare to see how he will answer it. He first makes you uneasy, sceptical, sensible of your helplessness and dependency upon his superior sagacity and recondite learning, and proportionably thankful for the relief he affords you in the unpleasant dilemma to which you have been reduced. It is like proposing a riddle, and then, after playing with the curiosity and impatience of the company for some time, giving the solution, which nobody else has the wit to find out. We never saw fuller attendances or more profound attention than at the Tron Church in Glasgow—it was like a sea of eyes, a swarm of heads, gaping for mysteries, and staring for elucidations—it was not the sublime or beautiful; the secret was that which has been here explained, a desire to get rid of the difficult, the disagreeable, the dry, and the discordant matter that had been conjured up in the imagination. Dr. Chalmers, then, succeeds by the force of sophistry and casuistry, in our humble judgment. Riddles (of which we spoke just now) are generally traditional: those that Dr. Chalmers unfolds from the pulpit are of his own invention, or at least promulgation. He started an objection to the Christian religion (founded on its supposed inconsistency with the Newtonian philosophy) which objection had never been noticed

in books, on purpose that he might answer it. "Well," said a Scotchman, "and if the answer was a good one, was he not right?" "No, assuredly," we should answer, "for there is no faith so firm as that which has never been called in question." The answer could only satisfy those who had been unsettled by the question; and there would be many who would not be convinced by the Doctor's reasoning, however he might plume himself on his success. We suspect that this is looking after a reputation for literary ingenuity and philosophical depth, rather than the peace of consciences or the salvation of souls; which, in a Christian minister, is unbecoming, and savours of the Mammon of unrighteousness. We ourselves were staggered by the blow (either then or long before) and still gasp for a reply, notwithstanding Dr. Chalmers's nostrum. Let the reader briefly judge:—The Doctor tells us, it may be said, that the Christian Dispensation supposes that the counsels of God turn upon this world as its centre; that there is a heaven above and an earth beneath; and that man is the lord of the universe, the only creature made in the divine likeness, and over whom Providence watches, and to whom revelations are given, and an inheritance everlasting. This agrees with the cosmogony of Moses, which makes the earth the centre of all things, and the sun, moon, and stars, little shining spots, like silver sixpences, moving round it.—

But it does not so well agree with Newton's *Principia* (we state Dr. Chalmers's objection) which supposes the globe we inhabit to be but a point in the immensity of the universe; that ours is but one, and that the most insignificant (perhaps) among innumerable worlds, filled, probably, with created intelligences, rational and fallen souls, that share the eye of God with us, and who require to know that their Redeemer liveth. We alone (it would appear) cannot pretend to monopolize heaven or hell: there are other contingent candidates besides us. Jacob's dream was poetical and natural, while the earth was supposed to be a flat surface and the blue sky hung over it, to which angels might ascend by a ladder, and the face of God be seen at the top, as his lofty and unchangeable abode; but this beautiful episode hardly accords with the Antipodes. Sir Isaac turned the world upon its back, and divided heaven from itself, and removed it far from every one of us. As we thought the universe turned round the earth as its pivot, so religion turned round man as its centre, as the sole, important, moral, and accountable agent in existence. But there are other worlds revolving in infinite space, to which this is a speck. Are they all desert, worthless? Were they made for us? Have they no especial dispensations of life and light? Have we alone a God, a Saviour, revealed to us? Is religion triumphant only

here, or is it itinerant through each ? It can hardly seem that we alone have occupied the thoughts or been the sole objects of the plans of infinite wisdom from eternity—that our life, resurrection, and judgment to come, are the whole history of a wide-seeing Providence, or the loftiest events in the grand drama of the universe, which was got up as a theatre only for us to perform our petty parts in, and then to be cast, most of us, into hell fire ? Dr. Chalmers' Astronomical Discourses indeed may be said to dwarf his mighty subject, and make mankind a very Lilliputian race of beings, which this Gulliver in vain dandles in the hard, broad, brawny hand of school divinity, and tries to lift it into their bigoted self-sufficiency and exclusive importance again. How does he answer his own objection, and turn the tables on himself—how reverse this pitiful, diminished perspective, and aggrandise us in our own estimation once more as undoubted heirs of heaven or hell—the sole favoured or reprobated sons of God ? Why, his answer is this—that the microscope has done as much to lift man in the scale of being, and to enlarge the bounds of this atom the earth, as the telescope has done to circumscribe and lessen it ; that there are infinite gradations **BELOW** man, worlds within worlds, as there are degrees of being above, and stars and suns blazing round each other ; that, for what we know, a speck, a lucid drop circulating in a flea's back, may be

another habitable globe like this!—And has that, too, a revelation of its own, an avenging God, and a Christ crucified? Does every particle in a flea's back contain a Mosaic dispensation, a Popish and a Protestant religion? Has it its Tron church and its Caledonian chapel, and Dr. Chalmers' Discourses and Mr. Irving's Orations in little? This does not seem to obviate the difficulty, but to increase it a million fold. It is his objection and his answer to it, not ours: if blasphemy, it is his; and if orthodoxy, he is entitled to all the credit of it. But his whole scheme shows how impossible it is to reconcile the faith delivered to the saints with the subtleties and intricacies of metaphysics. It displays more pride of intellect than simplicity of heart, is an insult equally on the understanding or prejudices of men, and could only have been hit upon by that personification and abstraction of cross-purposes, a Scotch metaphysical divine. In his general preaching, Dr. Chalmers is a great casuist, and a very indifferent moralist. He states the *pros* and *cons* of every question with extreme pertinacity, and often “spins the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument.” He assigns possible reasons, not practical motives, for conduct; and vindicates the ways of God, and his own interpretation of the Scriptures, to the head, not to the heart. The old school-divines set this practice afoot; for, being accustomed to hear the secrets of con-

fession, and to salve the tender consciences of the great and powerful, they had to bandy all sorts of questions about ; and if they could find out "a loop or peg to hang a doubt on," were well rewarded for their trouble ; they were constantly reduced to their shifts, and forced to go on the forlorn hope of morality by the ticklish cases referred to them for arbitration ; and when they had exhausted the resources of humanity and natural sentiment, endeavoured to find new topics within the range of abstract reason and possibility. Dr. Chalmers' reasoning is as unlike as possible to a chapter in the Gospels : but he may do very well to comment on the Apocalypse or an Epistle of St. Paul's. We do not approve of this method of carving out excuses or defences of doctrinal points from the dry parchment of the understanding or the cobwebs of the brain. Whatever sets or leaves the dogmas of religion at variance with the dictates of the heart, hardens the last, and lends no advantage to the first.

Mr. Irving is a more amiable moralist, and a more practical reasoner. He throws a glancing, pleasing light over the gloomy ground of Calvinism. There is something humane in his appeals, striking in his apostrophes, graceful in his action, soothing in the tones of his voice. He is not affected and theatrical ; neither is he deeply impassioned nor overpowering from the simple majesty of his subject. He is above

common-place both in fancy and argument ; yet he can hardly rank as a poet or philosopher. He is a modernised covenanter, a sceptical fanatic. We do not feel exactly on sure ground with him—we scarcely know whether he preaches Christ crucified, or himself. His pulpit style has a resemblance to the *florid gothic*. We are a little *mystified* when a man with one hand brings us all the nice distinctions and air-drawn speculations of modern unbelievers, and arms the other with “fire hot from hell,”—when St. Paul and Jeremy Bentham, the Evangelists and the Sorrows of Werter, Seneca, Shakspeare, the author of Caleb Williams and the Political Justice, are mingled together in the same passage, and quoted in the same breath, however eloquent that breath may be. We see Mr. Irving smile with decent scorn at this remark, and launch one more thunderbolt at the critics. He is quite welcome, and we should be proud of his notice. In the discourses he has lately delivered, and which have drawn crowds to admire them, he has laboured to describe the Sensual Man, the Intellectual Man, the Moral Man, and the Spiritual Man ; and has sacrificed the three first at the shrine of the last. He gave certainly a terrific picture of the death-bed of the Sensual Man—a scene where few shine—but it is a good subject for oratory, and he made the most of it. He described the Poet well, walking by the mountain side, in the eye of nature—yet

oppressed, panting, rather than satisfied, with beauty and sublimity. Neither Fame nor Genius, it is most true, are all-sufficient to the mind of man ! He made a fair hit at the Philosophers ; first at the Political Economist, who draws a circle round man, gives him so many feet of earth to stand upon, and there leaves him to starve in all his nobler parts and faculties : next, at the Great Jurisconsult, who carves out a mosaic work of motives for him, cold, hard, and dry, and expects him to move mechanically in right lines, squares, and parallelograms, drills him into perfection, and screws him into utility. He then fell foul of the Moralist and Sentimentalist, weighed him in the balance and found him wanting—deficient in clearness of sight to discern good, in strength of hand and purpose to seize upon it when discerned. But Religion comes at last to the aid of the Spiritual Man, couches the blind sight, and braces the paralytic limb ; the Lord of Hosts is in the field, and the battle is won, his countenance pours light into our souls, and his hand stretched out imparts strength to us, by which we tower to our native skies ! In treating of this subject, Mr. Irving introduced several powerful images and reflections, to show how feeble moral and intellectual motives are to contend with the allurements of sense and the example of the world. Reason alone, he said, was no more able to stem the tide of pre-

judice and fashion than the swimmer with his single arm (here he used an appropriate and spirited gesture, which reminded us of the description of the heroic action of the swimmer in Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*) is able to oppose the raging torrent, as the voice of conscience was only heard in the tumultuous scenes of life like the faint cry of the sea-bird in the wide world of waters. He drew an animated but mortifying sketch of the progress of the Patriot and Politician, weaned by degrees from his attachment to young liberty to hug old corruption ; and showed (strikingly enough) that this change from youthful ardour to a hoary, heartless old age of selfishness and ridicule (there were several Members of the Honourable House present) was not owing to increased wisdom or strength of sight, but to faltering resolution and weakness of hand, that could no longer hold out against the bribes, the snares, and gilded chains prepared for it. The romantic Tyro was right and free, the callous Courtier was a slave and self-conceited. All this was true ; it was honest, downright, and well put. There was no cant in it, as far as regards the unequal odds and the hard battle that reason has to fight with pleasure, or ambition, or interest, or other antagonist motives. But does the objection apply to morality solely, or has not religion its share in it ? Man is not what he ought to be—Granted ; but is he not different from this ideal standard, in

spite of religion as well as of morality? Is not the religious man often a slave to power, the victim of pleasure, the thrall of avarice, hard of heart, a sensual hypocrite, cunning, mercenary, miserable? If it be said that the really religious man is none of these, neither is the truly moral man. Real morality, as well as vital christianity, implies right conduct and consistent principle. But the question simply at issue is, whether the profession or the belief of sound moral opinions implies these; and it certainly does it no more than the profession or belief of orthodox religious opinions does. The conviction of the good or ill consequences of our actions in this life does not absolutely conform the will or the desires to good; neither does the apprehension of future rewards or punishments produce this effect completely or necessarily. The candidate for Heaven is a backslider; the dread of eternal torments makes but a temporary impression on the mind. This is not a reason, in our judgment, for neglecting or giving up in despair the motives of religion or morality, but for strengthening and cultivating both. With Mr. Irving, it is a triumphant and unanswerable ground for discarding and denouncing morality, and for exalting religion, as the sovereign cure for all wounds, as the *thaumaturgos*, or wonder-worker, in the reform of mankind! We are at a loss to understand how this exclusive and somewhat intolerant view of the subject is reconcileable with sound

reason or with history. Religion is no new experiment now first making on mankind; we live in the nineteenth century of the Christian æra; it is not as if we lived in the age of apostles, when we might (from novelty and inexperience of the intended dispensations of Providence) expect the earth to wear a new face, and darkness suddenly to flee away before the light of the gospel: nor do we apprehend that Mr. Irving is one of those who believe, with Mr. Croly, that the millenium actually commenced with the battle of Waterloo; that event seems as far off, to all outward appearance, as it was two thousand years ago. What does this make against the doctrines of christianity? Nothing; if, as far as they are implanted and take root, they bear fruit accordingly, notwithstanding the repugnance and thanklessness of the soil. Why then is Mr. Irving so hard upon the labours of philosophers, moralists, and men of letters, because they do not do all their work at once? Bishop Butler indeed wrote a most able and learned quarto volume, to prove that the slow growth and imperfect influence of christianity was a proof of its divine origin, and that in this respect we had a right to look for a direct *analogy* between the operations of the world of grace and nature, both proceeding as they did from the same Almighty hands! Our deservedly popular preacher has, however, an answer to what we have here stated: he says, "the time **MUST** and

WILL shortly come!" We never contradict prophecies ; we only speak to facts. In addressing himself to this point, Mr. Irving made a spirited digression to the Missionary Societies, and the impending propagation of the Gospel at home and abroad—all obstacles to it would speedily be surmounted :—"The Negro slave was not so enchain'd but that the Gospel would set him free ; the Hottentot was not so benighted but that its light would penetrate to him ; the South Sea Islander was not so indolent and voluptuous but that he would rouse himself at its call ; neither the cunning of the Italian, nor the superstition of the Spaniard, nor the tameness of the German, nor the levity of the French, nor the buoyancy of the Irish, nor the indomitable pride of the English, nor the *fiery manhood* of the Scotch, would be long able to withstand its all-pervading influence!" We confess, when our Caledonian pastor launched his canoe from the South Sea Isles and landed on European *terra firma*, taking measure of the vices of each nation that were opposed to the spirit of christianity, we did *prick up* our ears to know what fault he would, in due course of argument, find with his native country--it would go against the grain, no doubt, but still he had undertaken it, and he must speak out—When lo ! for some sneaking vice or sordid pettifogging disposition, we have our own "best virtue" palmed upon us as the only failing of the most

magnanimous natives of the North—*fiery manhood*, quotha ! The cold sweat of rankling malice, hypocrisy, and servility, would be nearer the mark—Eh ! Sir Walter ? Nay, good Mr. Blackwood, we meant no offence to you ! “ *Fiery manhood*” is the Anti-Christian vice or virtue of the Scotch that meets true religion on the borders, and beats her back with suffocating breath ! Is Christianity still then to be planted like oak timber in Scotland ? What will Dr. Chalmers and the other labourers in the vineyard say to this ?—“ We pause for a reply ! ” The best and most impressive part of Mr. Irving’s discourse (Sunday, the 22nd June) was that, in which he gave a very beautiful account of what Christianity had done, or rather might do, in aid of morality and the regeneration of the spirit of man. It had made “ corruption blossom,” “ annihilated time in the prospect of eternity,” and “ changed all nature, from a veil hiding the face of God, into a mirror reflecting his power and beneficence.” We do not, however, see why in the fervour of his enthusiasm he should affirm “ that Jesus Christ had destroyed melody,” nor why, by any allowed license of speech, he should talk of “ the mouth of God being muzzled by man.” We might not perhaps have noticed this last expression, considering it as a slip of the tongue ; but Mr. Irving preaches from written notes, and his style is, on the whole, polished and ambitious. We can con-

ceive of a deeper strain of argument, of a more powerful and overwhelming flood of eloquence ; but altogether we deem him an able and attractive expounder of Holy Writ ; and farther, we believe him to be an honest man. We suspect there is a radical " taint in him," and that Mr. Canning will be advised to withdraw himself from the congregation. His strokes aimed at iniquity in high places are bold, unsparing, and repeated. We would however suggest to him the propriety of containing his indignation at the advancement of the secular priesthood by " the powers that be ;" it is a thing of course, and his impatience of their elevation may be invidiously construed into a jealousy of the spoil. When we compare Mr. Irving with some other preachers that we have heard, and particularly with that crawling sycophant Daniel Wilson (who tendered his gratuitous submission to Nero the other day in the excess of his loyalty to George IV.) we are sorry that we have not been able to make our tribute of approbation unqualified as it is cordial, and to stifle *their* venal breath with the applauses bestowed upon *him*. " Oh ! for an *eulogy* to kill" all such with.

[The following has also ~~LOST~~ its way to us. We take it in as a foundling, but without adopting all its sentiments.]

MR. IRVING, THE QUACK-PREACHER.

WE have always set our faces against cant, quackery, and imposture, in every shape; but we think, of all places, the pulpit should be sacred from these. It ought to be the chosen retreat of simplicity, gravity, and decorum.—What then must be the feelings of every well-wisher to religion and good order, who witnesses the disgraceful scenes that are weekly acting at the Caledonian Chapel — the place itself resembling a booth at a fair, and the pulpit made into a stage for a tall, raw-boned, hard-featured, impudent Scotch quack to play off his ambiguous person and obscene antics upon? It is difficult to analyze Mr. Irving's figure. His hair is black and matted like a mane, his beard blue and *singed*; and he verges in his general appearance to the *simious* tribe, but of the largest species. To hear this person, so qualified, bandy Scotch dialectics, and “sweet religion make a rhapsody of words,” the great, the learned, and the fair, leering dowagers, and faded (or fading) blue stockings, throng twice every Lord's Day—for what?—to admire indecency, blasphemy, and sedition, twanged through the nose, and to be told that he (Mr. Irving)

has come up from the banks of the Esk with huge, hasty strides to *introduce God Almighty in London*, and to prop the falling throne of Heaven with his raised right arm ! This is too much, though Mr. Irving is six feet three inches high, and a Scotchman. One would think that the Christian and Protestant religion was of too old a standing to be put into leading-strings now, and that the fashionable and the fair will hardly consent to be baptised by this new St. John in the kennels of Saffron-hill and the mud of Fleet-ditch. Yet, when one looks at the half-saint, half-savage, it *does* seem as if society was to begin again ; and all our pre-established notions were confounded by the cross-fire of his double vision. A portentous cast in the right eye is one of the engines with which the orator supports his quackery—it is not a mote, but a beam—which he levels like a battering-ram at my Lord Liverpool (*proh pudor !*) accompanied with a taunt on his Majesty's Ministers and Government—which glances off from the gentle skull of Hone the parodist to Canning's polished forehead, and falls plump on the shaven crown of Mr. B—— M——, who sits on the steps of the pulpit, with a forlorn attitude and expression, like one of Cibber's celebrated figures. What did Mr. Irving mean, last Sunday, by issuing a Proclamation in the name of the King of Heaven, appointing himself Crier of the Court, beginning with a *To wit, to wit*, and

ending with damnation to all those who do not go to hear him ? He ought to have been hissed like a bad player who leaves his part to foist in fustian of his own. It would not have been borne but in the Scotch accent ; and the outrage was carried off by the oddity of the thing. What did he mean by saying, the Sunday before last, that the God of natural religion was like the Great Desert — dry, disagreeable, comfortless, deadly—where no one wished to dwell ? No one, we will be bold to say, would venture upon this gross insult to the God of Nature (whom we apprehend to be also the God of Christians) without that strong obliquity of mental vision that can keep natural religion in one eye and revealed religion in the other, look grave on the parent and fulsome on the daughter. Why does Mr. Irving cut and carve and make minced-meat of the attributes of the Almighty, to shock the pious and make the ignorant stare ? Why did he, on last Lord's day, assert, by an impudent figure, that the God of Mercy was like Alsatia, where the scum of mankind took refuge ? Does not this brawny bravo of the Caledonian Kirk want an asylum for himself ? Would it not be thought indecent and profane in us to retort such a metaphor, and ask this insane reviler whether, on his theory, the God of Justice is not the God of Newgate, and he himself a volunteer Jack Ketch ? We say the indecency, the profaneness would not be in us, but in the original

allusion. Mr. Irving will find before long that he cannot play with religion as with cups and balls ; that he cannot insult the feelings, the prejudices, and common sense of mankind with impunity ; and that, instead of taking implicit faith and established opinions in pieces, he had better let them remain in their original integrity. With respect to that last figure of his about Alsatia, we beg to say that the founder of the Christian religion has left a parable behind him about the Prodigal Son, but perhaps this authority may not weigh with the *modern* Saviour of the polite world ! In a word, this favourite of the frail votaries of religious theatra-cals should beware, with his tricks, his finery, and his goodly proportions, of the fate of Apuleius's Golden Ass. Still he might do in America.

No. XXXIX.

ON WASHERWOMEN.

WRITERS, we think, might oftener indulge themselves in direct picture-making, that is to say, in detached sketches of men and things, which should be to *manners* what those of Theophrastus are to *character*.

Painters do not always think it necessary to

paint epics, or to fill a room with a series of pictures on one subject. They deal sometimes in single figures and groups ; and often exhibit a profounder feeling in these little concentrations of their art than in subjects of a more numerous description. Their *gusto*, perhaps, is less likely to be lost on that very account. They are no longer Sultans in a seraglio, but lovers with a favourite mistress, retired and absorbed. A *Madonna* of Correggio's, the *Bath* of Michael Angelo, the *Standard* of Leonardo da Vinci, Titian's *Mistress*, and other single subjects or groups of the great masters, are acknowledged to be among their greatest performances, some of them their greatest of all.

It is the same with music. Overtures, which are supposed to make allusion to the whole progress of the story they precede, are not always the best productions of the master ; still less are chorusses, and quintetts, and other pieces involving a multiplicity of actors. The overture to Mozart's *Magic Flute* (*Zauberflöte*) is worthy of the title of the piece ; it is truly enchanting ; but what are so intense, in their way, as the duet of the two lovers, *Ah Perdona*,—or the laughing trio in *Cosi Fan Tutte*,—or that passionate serenade in *Don Giovanni*, *Dëh vieni alla finistra*, which breathes the very soul of refined sensuality ! The gallant is before you, with his mandolin and his cap and feather, taking place of the nightingale for that amorous hour ; and

you feel that the sounds must inevitably draw his mistress to the window. Their intenseness even renders them pathetic ; and his heart seems in earnest, because his senses are.

We do not mean to say that, in proportion as the work is large and the subject numerous, the merit may not be the greater if all is good. Raphael's *Sacrament* is a greater work than his *Adam and Eve* ; but his *Transfiguration* would still have been the finest picture in the world, had the second group in the foreground been away ; nay, the latter is supposed, and, we think, with justice, to injure its effect. We only say that there are times when the numerousness may scatter the individual gusto ; — that the greatest possible feeling may be proved without it ; — and, above all, returning to our more immediate subject, that writers, like painters, may sometimes have leisure for excellent detached pieces, when they want it for larger productions. Here, then, is an opportunity for them. Let them, in their intervals of history, or if they want time for it, give us portraits of humanity. People lament that Sappho did not write more : but, at any rate, her two odes are worth twenty epics like *Tryphiodorus*.

But, in portraits of this kind, writing will also have a great advantage ; and may avoid what seems to be an inevitable stumbling-block in paintings of a similar description. Between the matter-of-fact works of the Dutch artists, and

the subtle compositions of Hogarth, there seems to be a medium reserved only for the pen. The writer only can tell you all he means,—can let you into his whole mind and intention. The moral insinuations of the painter are, on the one hand, apt to be lost for want of distinctness, or tempted, on the other, by their visible nature, to put on too gross a shape. If he leaves his meaning to be imagined, he may unfortunately speak to unimaginative spectators, and generally does ; if he wishes to explain himself so as not to be mistaken, he will paint a set of comments upon his own incidents and characters, rather than let them tell for themselves. Hogarth himself, for instance, who never does any thing without a sentiment or a moral, is too apt to perk them both in your face, and to be over-redundant in his combinations. His persons, in many instances, seem too much taken away from their proper indifference to effect, and to be made too much of conscious agents and joint contributors. He “o'er-informs his tenements.” His very goods and chattels are didactic. He makes a capital remark of a cow's horn, and brings up a piece of cannon in aid of a satire on vanity.* It is the writer only who, without hurting the most delicate propriety of the repre-

* See the cannon going off in the turbulent portrait of a General-Officer : and the cow's head coming just over that of the citizen who is walking with his wife.

sentation, can leave no doubt of all his intentions —who can insinuate his object in two or three words, to the dullest conception, and, in conversing with the most foreign minds, take away all the awkwardness of interpretation. What painting gains in universality to the eye, it loses by an infinite proportion in power of suggestion to the understanding.

There is something of the sort of sketches we are recommending in Sterne: but Sterne had a general connected object before him, of which the parts, apparently detached, were still connecting links: and while he also is apt to overdo his subject, like Hogarth, he is infinitely less various and powerful. The greatest master of detached portrait is Steele: but his pictures, too, form a sort of link in a chain. Perhaps the completest specimen of what we mean, in the English language, is Shenstone's *School-Mistress*, by far his best production, and a most natural, quiet, and touching old dame.—But what? Are we leaving out *Chaucer*? Alas, we thought to be doing something a little original, and find it all existing already, and in unrivalled perfection, in his portraits of the Canterbury Pilgrims! We can only dilate, and vary upon his principle.

But we are making a very important preface to what may turn out a very trifling subject; and must request the reader not to be startled at the homely specimen we are about to give him, after all this gravity of recommendation. Not that

we would apologize for homeliness, as homeliness. The beauty of this unlimited power of suggestion in writing is that you may take up the driest and most common-place of all possible subjects, and strike a light out of it to warm your intellect and your heart by. The fastidious habits of polished life generally incline us to reject, as incapable of interesting us, whatever does not present itself in a graceful shape of its own, and a ready-made suit of ornaments. But some of the plainest weeds become beautiful under the microscope. It is the benevolent provision of nature that, in proportion as you feel the necessity of extracting interest from common things, you are enabled to do so ; and the very least that this familiarity with homeliness will do for us is to render our artificial delicacy less liable to annoyance, and to teach us how to grasp the nettles till they obey us.

The reader sees that we are Wordsworthians enough not to confine our tastes to the received elegances of society ; and, in one respect, we go farther than Mr. Wordsworth, for, though as fond, perhaps, of the country as he, we can manage to please ourselves in the very thick of cities, and even find there as much reason to do justice to Providence as he does in the haunts of sportsmen, and anglers, and all-devouring insects.

To think, for instance, of that laborious and inelegant class of the community—*Washerwomen*,

and of all the hot, disagreeable, dabbing, smoking, splashing, kitcheny, cold - dining, anti-company-receiving associations, to which they give rise.—What can be more annoying to any tasteful lady or gentleman, at their first waking in the morning, than when that dreadful thump at the door comes, announcing the tub-tumbling viragos, with their brawny arms and brawling voices? We must confess, for our own parts, that our taste, in the abstract, is not for washer-women; we prefer Dryads and Naiads, and the figures that resemble them:—

“ Fair forms, that glance amid the green of woods,
Or from the waters give their sidelong shapes
Half swelling.”

Yet, we have lain awake sometimes in a street in town, after this first confounded rap, and pleased ourselves with reflecting how equally the pains and enjoyments of this world are dealt out, and what a pleasure there is in the mere contemplation of any set of one’s fellow-creatures and their humours, when our knowledge has acquired humility enough to look at them steadily.

The reader knows the knock which we mean. It comes like a lump of lead, and instantly wakes the maid, whose business it is to get up, though she pretends not to hear it. Another knock is inevitable, and it comes, and then another; but still Betty does not stir, or stirs only to put herself in a still snugger posture, knowing very well

that they must knock again. "Now, 'drat that Betty," says one of the washerwomen; "she hears as well as we do, but the deuce a bit will she move till we give her another;" and at the word another, down goes the knocker again. "It's very odd," says the master of the house, numbling from under the bed-clothes, "that Betty does not get up to let the people in; I've heard that knocker three times."—"Oh," returns the mistress, "she's as lazy as she's high,"—and off goes the chamber-bell;—by which time Molly, who begins to lose her smypathy with her fellow-servant in impatience of what is going on, gives her one or two conclusive digs in the side; when the other gets up, and rubbing her eyes and mumbling, and hastening and shrugging herself down stairs, opens the door with—"Lard, Mrs. Watson, I hope you haven't been standing here long?"—"Standing here long! Mrs. Betty! Oh don't tell me; people might stand starving their legs off, before you'd put a finger out of bed."—"Oh, don't say so, Mrs. Watson; I'm sure I always rises at the first knock; and there—you'll find every thing comfortable below, with a nice hock of ham, which I made John leave for you." At this the washerwomen leave their grumbling, and shuffle down stairs, hoping to see Mrs. Betty early at breakfast. Here, after warming themselves at the copper, taking a mutual pinch of snuff, and getting things ready for the wash, they take a

snack at the promised hock ; for people of this profession have always their appetite at hand, and every interval of labour is invariably cheered by the prospect of *having something* at the end of it. "Well," says Mrs. Watson, finishing the last cut, "some people thinks themselves mighty generous for leaving one what little they can't eat ; but, howsomever, it's better than nothing."—"Ah," says Mrs. Jones, who is a minor genius, "one must take what one can get now-a-days ; but Squire Hervey's for my money."—"Squire Hervey !" rejoins Mrs. Watson, "what's that the great what's-his-name as lives yonder?"—"Aye," returns Mrs. Jones, "him as has a niece and nevvy, as they say eats him out of house and land ;"—and here commences the history of all the last week of the whole neighbourhood round, which continues amidst the dipping of splashing fists, the rumbling of suds, and the creaking of wringings out, till an hour or two are elapsed ; and then for another snack and a pinch of snuff, till the resumption of another hour's labour or so brings round the time for first breakfast. Then, having had nothing to signify since five, they sit down at half-past six in the wash-house, to take their own meal before the servants meet at the general one. This is the chief moment of enjoyment. They have just laboured enough to make the tea and bread and butter welcome, are at an interesting point of the conversation, (for there they contrive to

leave off on purpose,) and so down they sit, fatigued and happy, with their red elbows and white corrugated fingers, to a tub turned upside down, and a dish of good christian souchong, fit for a body to drink.

We could dwell a good deal upon this point of time, but we have already, we fear, ran out our limits ; and shall only admonish the fastidious reader, who thinks he has all the taste and means of enjoyment to himself, how he looks with scorn upon two persons who are perhaps at this moment the happiest couple of human beings in the street,—who have discharged their duty, have earned their enjoyment, and have health and spirits to relish it to the full. A washerwoman's cup of tea may vie with the first drawn cork at a bon-vivant's table, and the complacent opening of her snuff-box with that of the most triumphant politician over a scheme of partition. We say nothing of the continuation of their labours, of the scandal they resume, or the complaints they pour forth, when they first set off again in the indolence of a satisfied appetite, at the quantity of work which the mistress of the house, above all other mistresses, is sure to heap upon them. Scandal and complaint, in these instances, do not hurt the complacency of our reflections ; they are in their proper sphere ; and are nothing but a part, as it were, of the day's work, and are so much vent to the animal spirits. Even the unpleasant day

which the work causes up stairs in some houses, —the visitors which it excludes, and the leg of mutton which it hinders from roasting, are only so much enjoyment kept back and contracted, in order to be made keener the rest of the week. Beauty itself is indebted to it, and draws from that steaming out-house and splashing tub the well-fitting robe that gives out its figure, and the snowy cap that contrasts its curls and its complexion. In short, whenever we hear a washerwoman at her foaming work, or see her plodding towards us with her jolly warm face, her mob cap, her black stockings, clattering pattens, and tub at arm's length resting on her hip-joint, we look upon her as a living lesson to us to make the most both of time and comfort, and as a sort of allegorical union of pain and pleasure, a little too much, perhaps, in the style of Rubens.

L. H.

THE END.



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